

ROYAL  
AUCTION  
BRIDGE

—  
R. F. FOSTER

WITH  
NULLOS



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ROYAL  
AUCTION BRIDGE  
WITH NULLOS

BY

R. F. FOSTER

*Author of "Foster's Complete Hoyle," "Auction Bridge Up-to-Date," etc.*

INCLUDING THE OFFICIAL LAWS OF ROYAL  
AUCTION BRIDGE AS ADOPTED BY THE  
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# I

## INTRODUCTION

WHIST was a good game until they invented bridge, and bridge was a good game until they started to play auction. Auction was the best game of all until they suggested royals. This new game, having met and overcome every defect in the old, is regarded as the best card game for four players in the world to-day and will probably hold for the next ten years the places held, each for a decade, by whist and then by bridge.

Whist had the defect that the trump was determined by pure chance and that many of the strongest hands were wasted because the trump did not suit them. Bridge remedied that defect by allowing the dealer to select the trump and permitting his adversaries to double its value if they thought the selection a bad one for him.

But bridge had the defect that the dealer and his partner had a monopoly of the declaration, and while it was undoubtedly an improvement on whist it did not go far enough, because no matter how good the hands held by the non-dealers they had nothing to say about selecting the trump that would best fit their hands. Auction remedied this by allowing each player at the table a chance to pick out the suit and letting the man with the best cards play them for their full value.

But auction in its turn had the defect that the values

of the suits were not equitably adjusted, the advantage still being largely with the color of the cards dealt. With two of the four suits in the pack one might easily go game on the deal. With the other two suits this was impossible if either of them was the trump.

This forced the partners who held the black suits to take long chances in order to get something out of their cards and prompted the player who held the red suits either to outbid them or to sit still and slaughter their no-trumpers.

A man might hold the ten top cards in either of the black suits and be outbid by a player with five hearts or diamonds. All he could win would be from ten to twenty points and he might lose 100 if he overbid his hand a single trick. He could never go game unless he went no-trump and then he stood to lose anywhere from 50 points to 1,000, if the hand went wrong.

Under the new system of scoring in royals this objection is completely overcome, as each player at the table can afford to bid on any suit, all four offering a fair chance of going game on the hand, just as the red suits alone did in the old game of auction. Instead of the wide disparity between the values of the red and the black they are now only a point apart and a player will have to bid three diamonds to overcall three clubs, while in the older game three diamonds would have forced the club hand to bid five by cards.

This new method of scoring completely changes the value of every player's hand either individually or comparatively and necessitates an entirely new method of bidding. The old system of declarations by one part-

ner and support by the other is worthless in playing royals, because the information is no longer restricted to the difference between the red cards and the black, between hands that are good for nothing unless the partner has a no-trumper and those which are strong enough to stand alone. There are no longer any weak suits as distinguished from strong suits, so called, because all the suits are winning suits now.

In auction when a player bid two in hearts he practically told his partner to let him alone, even if he had three sure tricks in clubs and seven in spades, and the partner sat there and said nothing, although he might not have a heart in his hand. It was only when he had the other red suit, which was also a winning suit, that he dared to interfere with the original declaration. Now he can show his strength, no matter where it is, as six cards in a black suit are just as good as six cards in a red one.

In auction, with the penalty on one spade limited to 100 points, that suit was reserved for safety bids and nothing else. Statistics, which will be found on p. 30, show that in auction 40 per cent. of the dealer's declarations were safety spades. Two-spade bids, to encourage the partner to go no trumps, did not come up more than three times in 100 deals, and were not responded to more than once in three times.

The club suit, in auction, was kept for supporting and suggesting possible no-trumpers, not being declared more than five times in 100 deals, and it did not materialize into a no-trumper more than once in four times when it was declared. All the player had

left to fight with was the hearts and the diamonds, so that the game was practically divided into four elements—two fighting units, one lame duck, and one dead suit.

In royals this is all changed. The safety bid is still there, as it should be, like the white chip at poker; but this spade suit is still a good fighting suit if it has any strength to it, and takes its place along with the three others, so that the player has all four arms of the service, horse, foot, artillery and engineers, at his disposal in royals, while in auction he had nothing but the cavalry and artillery, the engineers being left in the ditch at the start and the infantry being too slow to get anywhere near the fighting line.

The main reliance of the old game was on the hospital service, which kept one side from losing more than 100 men at a time. The other part of it was a series of desperate no-trumpers, which reminded one of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava both in conception and results.

This being so, it must be evident that all the old text-books on auction bridge will be useless for the new game so far as the system of communication between partners is concerned, and that the player who wishes to keep up with the times and get the most out of his cards must study tactics that will better fit the new conditions.

The bridge player who took up auction had to disabuse his mind of many of his pet notions about makes, especially in the red suits, and one of the strong points in the best text-books on auction was the insistence on

the importance of the player's getting bridge out of his system.

The same is true to-day of royals. The methods by which partners came to an understanding of the possibilities of their combined hands in auction will be found not only useless but misleading in playing royals, because the chief object of the partnership is no longer to arrive at a no-trumper, but to avoid penalties. With wider experience this will undoubtedly be found to be the keynote of the new game.

The recent addition of the nullo declaration to the standard game seems to be gaining in popularity to such an extent as fully to justify its inclusion in the present edition. It appears to have been the one thing needed to equalize matters more fully in the bidding for the privilege of playing the dummy and scoring toward game.

It is notorious that when one side has a run of high cards and long winning suits, there is nothing the weaker hands can do to save rubber after rubber unless they risk adding to the value of those rubbers by the generally condemned practice of flag-flying.

With the advent of the nullo bid the weaker hands are put in possession of a weapon which enables them to force the stronger hands to declare up to their full value or forego the play. Many a no-trumper that gets the contract cheaply and goes game with three by cards could never win the game if it could be safely forced to bid four tricks. With the nullo at his disposal, there is no combination of cards on which a player cannot make some sort of a stand.

## II

### THE NEW COUNT

There are many persons who cannot understand why it should be that first-class players and teachers who objected so strongly to the royal spade are in favor of the lily, which is nothing but a royal spade under another name.

Their change of front is not with regard to the royal spade at all, which is now only a part of the game that they are calling lilies. The objection to the royal spade was that it spoiled the game of auction bridge. Their indorsement of it is because it forms an integral and important part of the game of lilies.

History gives an exactly parallel case. Thousands of poker players rebelled against the introduction of the straight and for several years could not agree as to whether it beat two pairs or triplets. All they did agree to was that it spoiled the game, and was more or less of a nuisance. But the moment the straight was combined with the flush to make a straight flush and provide against the contingency of any player's betting upon an invincible hand the straight was welcomed with open arms by players of every grade.

The most important card clubs in this country to-day, The Whist Club of New York and the New York Bridge Whist Club, have both adopted what is called the new count, which is shown in the following table:

Spades .... 2	Simple honors.. 4	Four honors.. 8
Clubs ..... 6	Simple honors.. 12	Four honors.. 24
Diamonds . 7	Simple honors.. 14	Four honors.. 28
Hearts .... 8	Simple honors.. 16	Four honors.. 32
Lilies ..... 9	Simple honors.. 18	Four honors.. 36
No trumps .10	Three aces.....30	Four honors.. 40

The manner of counting the four honors in one hand at double value, four aces in one hand as 100 and reckoning slams at 20 and 40 remains the same. Chicane is the value of simple honors.

The advantage of this game over the original game of auction lies in its elasticity and fairness. The suit values at auction were not properly balanced, having been borrowed from bridge, which was a monopoly, while auction allows free competition. In order to win at auction under the old count a man not only had to hold good cards but cards of a certain color. He might hold all the black cards in the pack and be outbid by a player with seven little hearts and a trick in diamonds.

As C. P. Cadley, one of the crack players at the New York Bridge Whist Club puts it, "They have always been talking about the poker element in auction being one of its attractions, but now auction beats poker, because the man whose judgment is sound on the value of his hand can always get out of it what it is worth, according to the hands opposed.

"The one spade bid by the dealer is just like the blind or betting a white chip after the draw at poker to see what the others think about their hands and get

a line on the comparative value of your own. But once the thing is started any man has a chance to bid his hand up to the limit and every suit has a show to go game. When a dealer does not want to chip along with a one spade bid he can put up his red checks for the limit at once if he likes by declaring a red suit or no trumps.

"In the old game there were only two suits that were worth anything, and if a man bid on the other two he was simply assuming a big risk for nothing, like a person going into a jackpot with an inside straight to draw to. As the game stands now under the new count he has all four suits to fight with, the original spade call by the dealer meaning practically nothing at all but a white chip to start things up."

"And the result of it?" he was asked.

"The result will be that the good player will get something for his skill, if he holds good cards, no matter what color they are, and it will also cut down those big rubbers and tend to make the general run of players less afraid of the game, because the bidding will be placed on a sounder basis and there will not be the same mad rush to make it no trumps on the black suits because that is the only way to win anything with them."

In one thing Mr. Cadley is certainly right. The new count will make a great difference in the bidding in those hands in which the black suits are massed in one hand or between partners. Many a fine black suit has been forced to waste its strength because it could not overcall a red suit or dare not go to no trumps

on its high cards alone. As an example of the old-style methods of handling a long black suit against superior strength take this hand:

♥ 9 7 4 3		
♣ J 9 8		
♦ K J 6 5		
♠ 10 3		
♥ Q 10 2		Y
♣ 10 7 5 2	A	B
♦ Q 10 9 7 8		
♠ 9	Z	
♥ K J 6		
♣ K 6 4		
♦ .....		
♠ A K J 8 7 5 4.		
♥ A 8 5		
♣ A Q 3		
♦ A 8 4 2		
♠ Q 6 2		

Z dealt and bid one no trump. A passed, not feeling equal to two diamonds. The bid suited Y, so he passed, but B wanted to show his partner what to lead, so he doubled, that being the conventional invitation to lead a spade when the no-trumper is declared on the left and no other bid has been made that would be a guide.

There was nothing for the others to do but to pass, so A led his top spade. B saw he could drop the queen if A had another spade, but failing in this he went on to clear the suit, having two possible reentries, A discarding a diamond and a club.

In order to get the finesse against B, who had the spades, Z led the ace of diamonds, intending to follow with a small one, put on the king and lead a club from dummy, A having discarded that suit. But when B

fell out on the diamond Z put on the jack from dummy, B discarding a heart and a club.

When Y led the club jack B covered and Z won with the ace. Another diamond and A's ten forced Y's king, B now discarding a spade. When Z failed to drop the ten of clubs with the queen Z made his ace of hearts and abandoned the rest of the tricks, having made his contract at double rates and 50 points penalty.

Give this hand to four persons playing the new count and there will be no difference in the bidding until it gets round to B. Instead of doubling, to tell his partner to lead a spade, he will declare two lilies, on which he does not run so much risk as he does in doubling a no-trumper. If Z overcalls with two no trumps he will be set for 50 points without doubling and A will know what to lead. If Z lets B play the hand for two lilies B wins without any trouble.

Z would naturally begin with the ace of diamonds, which B would ruff. As dummy cannot ruff anything B would take out two rounds of trumps and then play the king of hearts. Z's only play would be to force B again, and B would lead the jack of hearts, overtaking it with the queen, so as to lead a high diamond.

If Y does not cover B discards a losing club. If Y covers B trumps, puts A in again with a heart, makes a trick with dummy's queen of diamonds and forces Z's last trump with the fifth diamond, so that all the tricks Y and Z would make would be the two aces and the queen of trumps, leaving B four by cards and the game in lilies, which is quite a different result from losing 74 points and 30 aces.

Here is an illustration of how a black suit may successfully compete against a red, which was almost impossible in the old game on account of the size of the losses if the hand went wrong:

♥ 4			
♣ A Q J 8 6 3			
♦ 8 7			
♠ A Q 7 4			
♥ K 10 9 7	Y	♥ A J 8 5 2	
♣ K 4	A	♣ 10 7 5	
♦ Q J 4	B	♦ A 10 6 5 2	
♠ 10 6 5 3	Z	♠ .....	
♥ Q 6 3			
♣ 9 2			
♦ K 9 3			
♠ K J 9 8 2			

Playing under the old count, Z dealt and bid a spade. A passed and Y called a club. When B declared a heart Y took a chance on two clubs, as he was short of hearts, hoping to push B up a bit. This is a fair sample of the sort of thing that a player was forced into with the black suits in the old game. Y cannot possibly win in clubs even if he makes a grand slam and he is simply risking the loss of two or three hundred points for the sake of winning eight or of setting B back for 50 extra.

B went two hearts and Y had nothing more to say, as no player will undertake a four trick contract that cannot go game unless the situation is desperate.

Z led the club and Y led back the short diamond on

which B put the ace, giving up the jack from dummy. B then led the ace and another trump, finessing the nine. A picked up Z's queen and led the club, Y winning and leading another diamond which went to Z's king. Z led a spade which B ruffed. A trumped the third club and led the small diamond, which B won, getting four by cards and the game, which was what he was playing for when he saw that he must catch the queen of trumps to go game on the hand.

Play this hand on the new count with clubs worth six and lilies worth nine and B never gets a look in. Z will start with a spade, but as soon as Y shows the clubs and B bids a heart Z will shift to a lily, as he has the hearts stopped. If B goes two hearts Z passes, waiting for Y, and it does not matter whether Y goes back to clubs or supports the lily he goes game on the hand in a walk, as all that A and B can make is two aces, the finesse in clubs lying right for Y and Z.

The trick of lying low for penalties in the old game and driving players back into bids that would cost them money led to many interesting auctions in the old style. Here is a rather remarkable instance of a player who was fishing for penalties being smoked out at last greatly to his own benefit, as his partner was the one to put the information to the best use.

♥ .....  
 ♣ 10 6  
 ♦ 10 7 4  
 ♠ K Q J 8 7 5 3 2  
 ♣ 9  
 ♣ K Q J 9 8 5 2  
 ♦ K J 8  
 ♠ A 6

	Y		
A		B	
	Z		

♥ A K Q 8 5 2  
 ♣ A 7 3  
 ♦ 5 3  
 ♠ 9 4

♥ J 10 7 6 4 3  
 ♣ 4  
 ♦ A Q 9 6 2  
 ♠ 10

Z dealt and started with a heart, a poor bid, by the way, because there is not a trick in the suit; but that is not the point of the story. A bid two clubs and Y went four spades, so as to encourage his partner to keep on with the hearts. B, in the high grass for that heart make, went three clubs, as if he were afraid of hearts. Z fell for it and bid two hearts without any hesitation.

A, never dreaming what his partner's game was, and still afraid of those hearts, went four clubs, and B had to pass, as his little scheme was knocked on the head, when to his astonishment Z, who began to suspect something, shifted to three diamonds.

This A doubled, as he could not see nine tricks for Y and Z against his cards and his partner supporting his club bid. Y redoubled and poor B, fearing that his partner had got himself into a scrape, had to acknowledge that he was smoked out and bid three hearts, which Z doubled.

A now woke up to the true situation, but instead of redoubling Z, which might not have been a profitable game, he at once went no trumps and made five by cards on the contract without any trouble.

Play this hand on the new count and the bidding is entirely different, though perhaps not so interesting. Z will start with a spade and A will overcall with a club, but Y will bid a lily instead of four spades. This will smoke B out on the first round, and unless he declares two in hearts now the fight will be between A and Y on the black suits.

If B bid two hearts Z would double and A would have a nice little problem as to whether he should go two no trumps, knowing he must drop his ace of spades on the very first trick and might find the ace of clubs against him, or whether he should bid three clubs and force Y to three lilies.

Y would lose on three lilies, the hands being good for only two by cards, but A would go game in either clubs at six a trick or in no trumps at ten a trick. The three club bid is unquestionably the better call for A, as it is safer and will also encourage B to support it, as he has the ace.

If the hand is played as a club Y will lead the spade, as he has no hearts, and A will win it with the ace. By leading two winning trumps from his own hand A keeps the lead and plays a heart, comes back with a heart from B's hand and discards the losing spade. After that he will come through with a diamond and finesse the jack if Z does not put on the ace.

No matter how Z plays to the diamond lead A must

get two tricks in that suit, as he can always put B in with a trump, which is the object in keeping B's ace of trumps. This line of play will give A a little slam in clubs, worth 30 points, and the game. B would lose on the three heart contract and Z would lose on the double of a two heart bid.

There are a number of interesting details that will have to be decided by time and experience, especially in the matter of inviting the partner to go no trumps. This was a strong point in the old game of auction and dependence on the dealer for the strength to justify the invitation was the key to the third hand's declarations.

Here is a hand taken from one of the earliest textbooks on auction:

♥ A 9 6 4 3		
♣ 7 6 5 4		
♦ J 4 2		
♠ 9		
♥ .....		
♣ A K Q 8 2	Y	♥ K J 10 8 5 2
♦ 10 9 7 5	A B	♣ J 3
♠ K 10 7 2	Z	♦ A Q 8
♥ Q 7		♠ 6 3
♣ 10 9		
♦ K 6 3		
♠ A Q J 8 5 4		

Z dealt, at the score of love-all, and according to the system of those days declared two spades in order to show that he had strength enough in that suit to support a no-trumper, the possible outside trick making

up for the break in the winning sequence of spades. This puts it up to A, who doubles, to show his two possible stoppers, in case it is B and not Y that has the no-trumper.

The declaration being to make two tricks, the limit of penalties is taken off and Y-Z stand to lose 100 points a trick. All that Y knows about Z's hand is that he has a few tricks in spades, enough to help out a no-trumper, but it may be a bust outside, or it may not. As Y is very weak in spades and knows Z cannot shift without a hint, Y shows his longest suit, hearts, by calling that. This B doubles.

It now appears to Z that the best way out of the mess is a no-trumper, if his partner has some hearts and Z lies on the right side of the doubler with the queen, so Z goes no trumps, which A doubles, although he might have felt himself justified in going two no trumps so as to play the hand and try for game. This would have succeeded, as A can make three by cards if Y leads. On the double he won 300 in penalties, which the books say is worth a game refused.

A made five club tricks and then led the top diamond, finessing the eight from B's hand and forcing the king from Z, who had discarded one diamond and two spades. Z tried to clear his spades, but A held off the second round so as to get the tenace or force Z to shift.

This brought about a rather interesting situation. Z led a diamond so as to compel B to lead hearts, in which suit he had only king jack ten left. But Z overlooked his own discard and when he let go the small

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heart on the third round of diamonds B could count A for the queen of hearts alone, or no hearts at all, so he led the king, knocking ace and queen together. This gave B two heart tricks at the end, although the king of spades died.

As Z wins only four tricks of the contract to get seven, doubled, he is out 300 points, all of which is due to a forced bid at the start. Had he refused to overcall the doubled heart he would have lost at least 200 points on that contract, Y playing the hand, unless A had overcalled with a no-trumper, which would have cost Z the game.

The system forces Z to step beyond the limits of safety to invite a no-trumper with a two spade call when his hand is not good for two by cards in spades, although he could make the odd if A leads. This could all have been avoided if his partner had had the right to change the value of the suit without changing the suit itself from two points to nine a trick, at the same time reducing the contract from two spades to one by declaring a royal.

This is a safe call, as no dealer under the new count would be justified in bidding two spades unless he were willing to play the hand for one royal. This brings us face to face with the first requirement of the new game, a clear understanding of the hands on which a player should bid one spade, two spades, or one royal originally, and what his partner should do with them.

In the hand given if B overcalls with two hearts he can have it, as Z's hand is not good for two by cards.

It would be Y's business to go on to two royals if he had the cards.

If B overcalled Z's royal with two hearts A would probably go no trumps, as he has no hearts. No matter what A and B may do Y and Z run no risks, as there is no misunderstanding between them as to the possibilities of the combined hands.

### III

## FIRST PRINCIPLES

One of the first things that a person taking up royals will find essential to his success will be a clear understanding of the precise meaning of the various calls made by the dealer originally, especially in the spade suit. This knowledge will be necessary whether he be second hand or the dealer's partner, because upon this foundation will be found to rest the superstructure upon which the safety of all secondary declarations will depend.

The natural starting point in bridge was the notrumper, and the spade make was worked down to as a sort of last resort. But in royals, even more than in auction, the system of declarations starts from the safe ground of hands which at bridge would have been passed makes. At auction this was the one spade call, and at royals it will still be one spade when it is not good enough for one royal.

Trifling as this distinction may appear at first sight, and lightly as it has been passed over by those who have so far attempted to teach the game, its importance will become apparent when its bearing upon all the later bids has been examined. Statistics for 500 deals analyzed for the declarations at auction seemed to show that 40 per cent. of the hands were original spade calls for the dealer when judged by a certain standard of declaring.

But the moment this system is changed, as it must be under the new count, we inevitably change the percentage of declarations that fall into the various divisions of that system, and this naturally affects the whole scheme, so that the principles deduced from a series of hands at auction are worthless when applied to royals.

#### THE SCALE OF DECLARATIONS

Before we can intelligently apply any system of measurement to a hand of thirteen cards we must agree upon some scale of units by which this measurement may be expressed. That is we must have some test rules by which hands may be judged and classified as spade bids, heart bids, no-trumpers and so on, or we are simply guessing at it.

It does not matter much what the scale of measurement may be, because if any individual does not agree with it in any particular part all he need do is to throw out that unit and use his own in its place.

If the standard which we purpose adopting in these pages says that a dealer should not declare a heart without a minimum of two sure tricks to four in suit, such as ace king and two others, and therefore you should not call two spades on ace king and two small, without an extra trick to make up for the extra declaration; if you think one should have five in suit to justify the heart call, then one should have five in suit to justify the two spade call. Whether one measures a thing by feet and inches or by the metric system, the proportion of one part to the other remains the same,

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and that is what we are all aiming at in playing royals.

To start with, we must have some sort of a rule to measure with, some sort of scale to apply to any hand under discussion, and for this purpose the following principles are offered as probably the best that our present limited experience has been able to formulate.

#### NO TRUMPS

This is still the most valuable call, because it goes game with three odd tricks, but it is also still the most dangerous, as almost anything can happen to a no-trumper that is not a certainty. A player recently held four aces and the queen jack ten of three suits, on which he bid two no trumps, was doubled and lost 400 points, although he played the hand perfectly.

The established standard for a no-trumper, in any of the three forms of bridge, straight, auction or royals, is a queen above average, with protection in three suits. If the strength is no more than queen or king above average there should be at last two aces. With only one ace the hand should be much above average or protected in all four suits. These near no-trumpers are expensive when they go wrong.

An average hand has its exact share of the high cards—one ace, king, queen, jack and ten. As a king and queen in the same suit is a sure trick it is equal to an ace, and as the queen, jack, ten in the same suit is a sure trick it is equal to a king and queen or to an ace. Such hands as the following are respectively queen and king above average:

♥ A 3 2  
 ♦ K Q 8 6 4  
 ♦ .....  
 ♦ Q J 10 6 4  
 QUEEN ABOVE

♥ A 7 5 4  
 ♦ K J 10 5  
 ♦ A 9 3  
 ♦ 7 2  
 KING ABOVE

There are also certain so-called "sporty" no-trumpers in which the element of protection in three suits is absent, but which offer a chance for a big game if the partner has anything in the other suits. Such hands as the following:

♥ 8 6 4  
 ♦ A K Q 3  
 ♦ 7 5 2  
 ♦ A K 6

♥ A 6  
 ♦ A K Q 7 6 5 3  
 ♦ 5 2  
 ♦ 8 4

The first of these holdings makes it highly improbable that the partner can have a no-trumper, as he cannot protect three suits. The second is taking a chance that he has something better than a Yarborough and can get into the lead just once. If he can, the hand goes game.

#### THE RED SUITS

Viewed from the standpoint of old-fashioned auction, all suits are "winning" suits in royal auction, as any suit will go game from zero.

For an original declaration in either of the red suits in royals high cards are insisted on, unless the suit is long enough to justify an original call of two tricks. The object in declaring on high cards is to provide against a shift by the partner.

The minimum is ace king queen alone, and the average red declaration should be at least ace king and two small, or any three honors and five in suit, even without a sure trick in any other suit.

♥ A K Q	♦ A Q 10 7 5
♦ A K 6 4	♥ K Q J 4 2
♥ A Q J 3 2	♦ K Q 10 6 3

These declarations are all invitations to the third hand to go no trumps, as there is little hope of their doing anything by themselves if left as a trump make.

Any deficiency in high cards or in length must be made up for by winning cards in other suits. With such red cards as these, for example:

♥ A Q 6 3	♦ K Q 7 5 3
♦ A Q J 4	♦ K J 10 5 4

Each being a high card or a trump shy of the scale weight, there must be an ace, or a king and queen, or king jack ten, in some other suit to justify the declaration.

With any weaker suits, such as five cards to the king jack or king ten, or queen jack ten, there should be at least two sure tricks in another suit, or a strong five card suit headed by king queen jack, or king queen ten.

A red suit of six or seven cards which has only one sure trick in it, such as the ace, or king and queen, or king jack ten, may be declared originally even if there is not another trick in the hand; but if the partner

overcalls with a no-trumper he must be again overcalled with the red suit, in order to show that it will be of no assistance to him, but that his winning cards will be useful to back up the trump suit.

#### THE CLUB SUIT

In royal auction, clubs are declared on precisely the same principles, and for the same reasons. All the dealer's one trick calls in suits that can go game are made with a view to the possibility of the third hand shifting to no trumps, and a one trick bid shows the potential tricks, but the two trick call shows length only, and the player with six or seven clubs to a single trick, such as the ace, should stand ready to overcall his partner's no-trumper with two clubs, just as he would with two diamonds or two hearts.

In old-style auction, the dealer could not do this, because the no-trumper shut him out, so he reserved the one club call for average assistance in high cards, and called two clubs when that assistance was unusual, so that the bid was in the nature of a shout for no trumps. He said nothing at all about a long weak club suit, because he could not go game with it. But now, with clubs worth six, the dealer can overcall a no-trumper with two clubs, and his game is much less cramped.

#### THE SPADE SUIT

In auction one spade meant "I pass," and two spades meant strength enough to assist a potential no-trumper. But in royals the spade suit is more valuable than any of the others and will come as close to game as a heart,

as either suit will win out with four odd. It is therefore evident that we must judge the spade suit by the same standards as the hearts or the diamonds, and for the same reasons.

The only difficulty that presents itself lies in the position already assigned to the one spade call, but this is easily overcome by adopting the two spade call in its place, or rather in the place of what would be a one trick call in any other suit.

But a two trick call in spades takes the declarer outside the safety limit of 100 in penalties. If he could convey the same information of strength without length by a one trick call, it must be admitted that it would be as sound as it is to make that call in hearts or in diamonds, in which suit there is no protection.

This brings us to what will undoubtedly prove to be the keys to the bidding in royals. If it is sound bidding to call one heart with four to the ace king and not a trick outside, it is sound to make that call in spades or any other suit. If it is necessary to declare an extra trick to convey one's meaning in spades, then one should have that extra trick in the hand to justify the call.

If this reasoning is sound, we may start with this as our first principle. With such cards in spades as you would bid one trick, if the spades were a red suit, bid two spades if there is another trick anywhere in the hand to make up for the advance of the bid from one trick to two.

One great point in favor of this call is the importance of being able to inform your partner, without any

chance of his misunderstanding it, that the two spade call is a request to go no trumps and that you will not interfere with it if he makes that declaration, as you might do in either of the red suits.

This is because it is unwise to overcall your hand on the first round in the red suits, so that you should not begin with two tricks, but reserve that call for cases in which your partner goes no trumps, depending on you for winning cards which you do not hold. This cannot happen in the spade suit, but in the red suits there is no way to distinguish between strength and length on the first call, unless you assume what may be an entirely unnecessary contract.

When the spade suit is such that if it were hearts or diamonds you would stand ready to go two tricks on it, you declare its nature by bidding one royal. This would be the correct declaration with seven spades to the king jack, for instance, without another trick in the hand. If you start with two in a red suit, it takes two no trumps to overcall, but it takes but one no trump to overcall your royal.

Postponing for the present the analysis of the percentage of hands that are affected by this change in the scale of measurement as applied to the dealer's cards, let us glance at the way it works out in practice. Here is a hand in which the bidding was carried out under the system which has just been outlined:

♥ Q 5 4 3 2		
♣ K Q 7 2		
♦ 9 8 6		
♠ 5		
♥ A 10 9 8 6	Y	♥ K J
♣ A 8	A B	♣ J 6
♦ K J 7		♦ Q 5 4 3
♠ J 3 2	Z	♠ Q 9 8 6 4
♥ 7		
♣ 10 9 5 4 3		
♦ A 10 2		
♠ A K 10 7		

Z dealt and bid two spades, holding in his hand sufficient strength to justify a one trick call if the spades were hearts, and an outside ace to justify increasing the call to two tricks. A passed.

Y could not accept the invitation to go no trumps, and had nothing to support spades as trumps, but with the knowledge that his partner must have an extra trick somewhere to justify the two spade call, he declared his longest suit, hearts, so as to get out of the two trick contract. B passed.

Z in his turn has nothing to support the heart make and therefore follows the principle always advocated in auction, overcalling to show that he has nothing in that suit, but has a fairly long suit of his own. Z bids two clubs.

This system of overcalling is something that the beginner should study attentively. If one player calls a diamond, holding six of the suit, that does not say how many he has of any other suit. If his partner has

no diamonds, or only one, but has six hearts, he over-calls with a heart, because it is not impossible that while they have but seven diamonds between them, there may be three or four hearts in the diamond hand, and they will then have ten trumps between them, instead of seven.

Z's overcall of two clubs gives Y a photograph of his hand. He has strong but short spades, not good enough for a royal. He has a sure trick outside somewhere, and he is long in clubs, but very short in hearts.

A does not like this shift to the clubs, as he was sitting tight to down the heart contract, but what is he going to do about it?

Y cheerfully accepts the amendment offered by the dealer and passes. B cannot risk a royal against two sure tricks in spades marked over him to the left, and all suits declared against him but the diamond, so he passes, the hand is played at two clubs, and Z makes three by cards.

## IV

### THREE USES FOR THE SPADE CALL

The moment you introduce a new suit or advance the value of an old one in bidding at royals in bridge you must borrow from all the other suit declarations to fill the place this new one creates. Just as soon as you promote spades to a fighting suit you will find that many of the hands upon which the dealer would be content to bid a spade at auction are long enough in the spade suit to justify a royal, and many of the hands that were two trick no trump invitations will come under the same head if the spade suit is long as well as strong.

Any person taking up royal auction for the first time should have clearly before him the three uses for the spade call and the three answers to it by the third hand.

1. One spade, to show that he passes the declaration.
2. Two spades, to show that he can assist a no-trumper with some winning cards in a short spade suit.
3. A royal spade, to show that he wants spades for trumps.

The declaration of any one of these should preclude the others or the partner would be misled. When the dealer starts with one spade he denies strength enough in spades to assist a no-trumper and he denies two sure tricks in any of the other suits, or he would name them.

When the dealer starts with two spades he denies length in the spade suit; denies two sure tricks in any better suit, but shows at least two sure tricks in the spade suit itself and one trick outside to justify the extra trick call.

When the dealer starts with a royal, he does not care what his partner has, because he would rather play the hand with spades for trumps at nine a trick than take any chances with a no-trumper. The original call of a royal means much the same as a two-heart call did in auction: "Partner, please let me alone, unless you know what you are doing."

It is interesting to examine the results of applying this system of declaring to 500 hands which were analyzed with a view to discovering the percentage of the original declarations at auction before royals were thought of.

#### 500 DECLARATIONS AT AUCTION

100 Hands at a time

Bid	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
No Trump .....	26	22	21	32	21	122
Hearts .....	13	15	15	16	10	69
Diamond .....	10	7	11	7	10	45
Club .....	5	3	9	3	6	26
2 Spades .....	4	4	3	2	3	16
1 Spade .....	42	49	41	40	50	222
	100	100	100	100	100	500

In this table it will be found that there were 222 one-spade calls, and sixteen two-spade bids by the dealer.

As soon as we introduce the element of a royal spade we reduce the two-spade calls to 9, because 7 of them are better royals, and we reduce the one-spade calls to 184, as 38 of the hands which fell into this class become royals.

Add these together and we get 45 royals in 500 deals, which is just equal to the number of hands on which we would have declared a diamond in the same 500.

As there were 69 heart hands to 45 diamond hands in those 500 deals at auction, the question naturally suggests itself whether this superiority of hearts was not due to giving that suit the preference over diamonds whenever an opportunity offered for a choice. If the answer is in the affirmative, then why should we not examine not only the hearts but the diamonds and the clubs, to see if there are not some of them that would yield the place to a royal spade call if there were a choice, on account of its greater value, just as we pick a heart in preference to a diamond.

But why stop at the suit declarations? There are surely many hands upon which no trump would be the original call at auction which would never take that risk if the spade suit were worth more than hearts. Teachers are never tired of drilling it into their pupils that a safe heart is better than a risky no-trumper, however little the risk may be. Why should not the same rule apply to royals?

Take this hand as an example of the difference the promotion of the spade suit will make:

♥ A 9 2		
♦ 9 7 3 2		
♦ Q J 9		
♦ Q 10 8		
♥ K 8 7 4 3	Y	♥ 6
♦ J 10 8	A	♦ Q 8 6
♦ 10 6 4 3	B	♦ A K 8 7 5 2
♦ 5	Z	♦ A 7 6
♥ Q J 10 5		
♦ A K 4		
♦ .....		
♦ K J 9 8 4 2		

At auction Z was quite justified in declaring no trumps on his cards as dealer, as he is king-jack above average and protected in three suits. A and Y passed, but B called two diamonds. Being unable to stop the diamond suit or shift, unless to hearts, Z passed, having no fear of B's going game, but Y, who could stop the diamonds, went to his partner's assistance with two no trumps, which effectually stopped B. The contract was set for fifty points, because B got a diamond lead from his partner and made five diamonds by getting in again with the ace of spades.

While it must be admitted that this is perfectly legitimate bidding for both Z and Y at auction, Z's opening call would be rather injudicious at royals, because if we suppose for a moment that his spades are hearts and give the hand to any bridge player, the wisdom of declaring hearts in preference to no trumps would be at once apparent.

If Z declares one royal on these cards and overcalls B's two diamonds with two royals, or even with three

if pushed to it, he will make five by cards, four honors, and the game, a difference of 131 points, without counting the equity of 125 for a game won.

In the 500 deals which were examined for the opening bids at auction, there were 122 original no-trumpers; nearly twice as many as hearts and three times as many as diamonds. If we examine these hands under the new count we shall find seventeen of them should be royals instead of no-trumps.

That brings our total up to 45, plus 17, or 62 royals so far in 500 deals. In the heart suit itself we find six that would be better royals under the new count, which brings our total to sixty-eight. In the diamond calls we find five more that are better original royals, which carries us along to seventy-three. In the small number of club calls we find but one better royal, so that the table of proportionate declarations for the new count would stand about this way:

#### DECLARATIONS IN 500 DEALS

Original no-trumpers by the dealer.....	105
Original royals by the dealer.....	74
Original hearts by the dealer.....	63
Original diamonds by the dealer.....	40
Original clubs by the dealer.....	25
Original two spades by the dealer.....	9
Original one spade by the dealer.....	184
<hr/>	
Total.....	500

As already pointed out in the previous analysis, this proportion might not hold for another 500 deals, and it would take a very large number of deals to arrive at the exact figures, but it will be seen that the sliding scale seems to be well maintained, gradually diminishing in number as the hands grow less valuable until we get to the passing hands. These are reduced from 44 per cent. to 37 per cent. under the new count.

As an example of the class of hand that would be considered a safer heart than no trump at bridge or auction, take these cards:

♥ 8 5 3		
♦ K 10 6 5 4		
♦ 4 2		
♠ Q 5 3		
♥ 7		Y
♠ Q 8 7 3 2	A	B
♦ J 8 7		
♦ J 10 7 6	Z	
♥ Q J 6 2		
♦ J 9		
♦ A K Q 10 9 6		
♦ 9		
♥ A K 10 9 4		
♦ A		
♦ 5 3		
♠ A K 8 4 2		

As originally played Z preferred the heart call, which B went over with two in diamonds. Upon Z's going on to two hearts it was A that went three diamonds on the strength of his ability to ruff hearts on the second round, which was rather forward bidding, but it induced Z to risk three in hearts, which B doubled.

Now if Z shifts to no trumps A knows to lead a dia-

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mond, so Z had to let it stand at three hearts doubled and lose 100 points on the contract through being afraid to finesse against two cards in trumps.

A led the diamond, and after two rounds B shifted to the singleton spade. Z let this run to the queen and led the trump, B playing low. As Z figured that the trumps might lie two and three and that B would cover with both queen and jack he put on the king and led the ace. Then he led the ace of clubs to get out of dummy's way and followed with the king of spades, which B trumped. B drew dummy's trump and then led another diamond, forcing Z, but A had to give dummy a club trick after making the jack of spades.

Under the new count Z's hand is a better royal, as the high cards in hearts are more easy to establish as trick winners than the three minor cards in spades. While B will certainly bid two diamonds, he cannot afford to risk three diamonds against two royals. Neither can A, as he cannot ruff Z's declared suit. Even if three diamonds were bid, Z can afford to risk three royals just as quickly as he would go three hearts.

In this play, after two rounds of diamonds B will lead the heart queen, as his singleton is a trump. Z will make his ace of clubs, lead two high trumps first and then put dummy in to make the king of clubs and come through B with a heart so as to finesse the nine, forcing A's last trump and leaving Z three by cards, instead of the loss that was actually incurred on the heart contract.

Here is an instance of giving the preference to a

royal in a hand which would otherwise be two diamonds:

♥ Q 9 7			
♣ A 7 5			
♦ J 6			
♠ 9 7 5 4 3 2			
♥ J 10 4 2	Y	♥ K 8 6 3	
♣ J 9 8 2	A B	♣ K Q 10 6 4 3	
♦ A Q 8 3	Z	♦ 7	
♠ 8		♠ K 2	
♥ A 5			
♣ .....			
♦ K 10 9 5 4 2			
♠ A Q J 10 6			

As originally played, when Z bid the diamond A and Y passed and B overcalled with two clubs. This pushed Z to two diamonds, which all passed. Had A been tempted to try a no-trumper he would have come to grief on the unmentioned suit, spades.

A led the club and dummy put on the ace, Z discarding a heart. The finesse of the jack of trumps lost to the queen and let A lead another forcing club. A then won one of Z's two equals in trumps with the ace and led clubs once more. At this point Z made the mistake of pulling both A's trumps and then trying to drop the king of spades.

Failing in this, he let in three clubs and lost 50 points on his contract. His proper play was to clear the spades first, even if he left the long trump against him, which would have made three by cards but not

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the game. This is a useful lesson in trump management for the beginner.

In this hand under the old count the spade suit is worth nothing except as an assistance to the trump suit, and the only choice that Z has is between a diamond and no trumps. As the cards lie this would have failed as a no-trumper because A would open with the jack of hearts and Z would have no way of getting dummy into the lead to try the spade finesse, even if he cared to risk such a thing with ten of the suit between the two hands.

With spades at nine a trick this hand is a better royal than a diamond, as it can go game with one trick less, and it is better than no trumps because it is safer. B may overcall a royal with two clubs, but Z will certainly go on to two royals, as he can ruff clubs.

Whether or not B would risk three clubs at six a trick is a question, especially with the spades on the wrong side of his king. Even if he does Z will go three royals, as his loss cannot be large.

If played as a royal Z wins four by cards and the game easily. A will open the club and Z will get a heart discard on the first trick. He cannot lose anything by a finesse in spades, as diamonds or hearts must come up to him, but granting that he does not take it and lets the king make, all he can lose after that is two diamond tricks no matter how the cards lie.

This seems to lead to the conclusion that a royal may not only be the best form of a spade call, but it may be safer than no-trumps, better than an equally strong

heart and easier to go game with than an equally strong diamond.

But there is one objection to the royal that statistics do not bear out, and that is the contention that it would practically put an end to no-trumpers.

"If they play royal spades at nine a trick," say the objectors, "it will be all suit makes, as they are safer."

So far from this being the case, the effect seems simply to be to cut down the hands on which the dealer passed, or asked his partner to do something with the spade suit, and that there has been very little interference with the no-trumpers, turning an average of only 13 per cent. into suit makes.

As all the other royal declarations are borrowed from other suits, it cannot be said that those have cut down the no-trumpers, because they never were no-trumpers. If it is only about seventeen hands in 500, or less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., that are royals instead of no trumps, the statement that the new count makes everything a royal spade and nothing a no-trumper must be largely erroneous.

## V

### ANSWER TO THE ONE SPADE BID

The principles upon which the dealer declares one spade or two spades or one royal as his first call being thoroughly understood, it becomes the duty of the third hand to make his answer equally clear and at the same time to protect the interests of the combination.

In addition to the three distinct calls that the dealer may make there are three principal cases which require attention, depending on the interference of the second hand. The first is when he doubles the one spade call, the second when he bids a suit for only one trick, and the third when he overcalls the spade with a royal instead of doubling, or overcalls the royal with a two trick bid in another suit.

But before considering these it will be necessary to see what the answer of the third hand should be when there is no interference from the second hand, because we shall then be better able to judge how far he might stretch his declaration in order to cover this interference if it arises on the first round of bids.

If the dealer starts with one spade and the second hand passes, the third hand should be more conservative than usual in his bids because he knows that the dealer's hand is below the average and may be very much below, probably not good for two certain tricks at the best. If the third hand's own cards are not

very much above the average he is probably assuming a contract that will prove expensive if he makes a bid.

The first thing for the third hand to remember is that it is useless to offer information to a dealer who has started with a spade call in the hope that it may induce him to improve upon the declaration, because the usual result will be that he will turn to and help you.

Many players fall into this error, declaring upon their cards as third hand as if they were in the dealer's position and giving their partner hints as to what they could do to help him in case he has the elements of a no-trumper or a good red make in his cards. Here is a case of this kind:

♥ Q 9 3		
♦ A K 10 4		
◊ J 10 2		
♠ 9 8 3		
♥ K 7 4	Y	♥ A J 5
♦ 6 2	A	♦ Q J 9 8 3
◊ A K 9 5 3	B	◊ 8 4
♠ Q J 10	Z	♠ A K 5
♥ 10 8 6 2		
♦ 7 5		
◊ Q 7 6		
♠ 7 6 4 2		

Z dealt and called a spade. A passed and Y called one club, in order to show his partner where his strength lay and also to take him out of the spade call. B doubled and Z was helpless. When A passed Y did not know which way to jump, so he let the double stand and the contract was set for 500 points.

B started with three rounds of spades, A winning the third with the queen. Instead of playing out his diamonds, which would have made dummy's queen good for a trick, A led up to the weakness in hearts and B won the trick with the jack, coming back with the eight of diamonds.

A made both ace and king of diamonds and reading his partner out of the suit let B ruff a third round. B then led two rounds of hearts, ace first, and A came through with the trump, as he could count his partner for nothing but clubs at this stage.

It is clear that no matter how Y plays to this trick he can make only two of his trumps, and these two tricks, the ace and king of the suit that he was so anxious to show his partner, are the only tricks he makes on his contract to win seven.

With their cards A and B could have gone game at no trump, or even in clubs, but with Y giving them the chance to pick up penalties by the hundred without any risk to themselves, they had a better thing of it. Had Y passed the spade, as he should have done, B would have called a club, and even if he had gone game on the hand it would have been cheaper for Y than losing 500 points in penalties.

It would have been quite right to declare a club on Y's cards as dealer, because he is then forced to bid something and has in his favor the probability that his partner holds his share of high cards in other suits. But when this partner has had an opportunity to declare in advance, and has said that he has not his fair

share of high cards, such a declaration as Y's is manifestly unsafe.

As a rule, when your partner is the dealer and calls one spade, you should have a hand upon which you would be willing to bid two tricks in suit if you had the original call, or you should let the spade alone and shelter yourself behind the 100-point penalty limit if the adversaries refuse to take you out.

Some persons seem to be totally unable to count losers. They can tell you how many sure tricks they have in their cards as a rule, although many overestimate the value of single honors, but they cannot see the losing cards. If they have only two sure tricks, they must have eleven potential losers, but this figure does not seem to penetrate their consciousness with the same rapidity and certainty that the two winners develop.

This exaggerated idea of the strength of their hands leads to bidding beyond the legitimate value of their trick-taking powers, especially after they have been warned by the dealer, their partner, to be careful. Here is a case in which the third hand made the excuse for his bid that he had only one card below a nine in his whole hand, and thought he had to show his strength by declaring something.

♥ J 10 9		
♦ A K J		
◆ Q J 10 9 5		
♠ K 9		
♥ K 7 5 3	Y	♥ A Q 2
♣ 4	A B	♦ Q 8 7 6 5 2
♦ A K 4 2		♦ 8 3
♠ A Q J 3	Z	♠ 8 4
♥ 8 6 4		
♣ 10 9 3		
♦ 7 6		
♠ 10 7 6 5 2		

Z dealt and declared one spade. A did not double, because the only object in doubling a spade is to encourage the partner, fourth hand, to go no trumps if he has everything but the spades. This A knows from his own cards that his partner cannot be strong enough to do.

As already explained, Y's cards looked to him as if they were all winners, and he promptly declared a diamond. B wisely refrained from calling two clubs, and A, who did not know where the clubs lay, declined to double for fear Y or Z would shift to the club suit.

All that Y got out of this wonderful hand was three trump tricks and the jack of clubs, losing 150 points when he was insured against losing more than 100 on the spade and had no chance whatever to go game in diamonds.

B led the club and Y won it with the jack, leading a trump. A won this and led up to the weakness in hearts, B making the queen and leading another club for A to ruff. This brought another heart from A, and

gave him another ruff in clubs, killing both the ace and king in Y's hand.

A then made the king of hearts and led a fourth round, which Y trumped with the nine, thinking to force the ace of trumps from B. Holding the trick, Y led a trump, knocking the ace and eight together, and A led another heart, forcing Y to trump, so that he eventually lost two spade tricks.

Y's cards look large, but if we analyze them we must admit that they are not strong enough to justify a two-trick call and therefore not strong enough to justify any declaration in the face of the partner's original spade. Three trumps, two clubs, and a possible spade is the limit, which is a long way from eight tricks.

The safe rule for the third hand, therefore, would seem to be not to overcall the dealer's spade unless he holds cards that would justify him in asking his partner to let him alone, which is the usual meaning of a two-trick bid. When a player starts with a declaration of two hearts, for instance, he usually does not care much what his partner has, and the same principle might be applied to the third hand when he knows his partner has nothing, and he makes a declaration of one trick, not caring what his partner has.

Unfortunately, the original call of one spade does not show anything in the spade suit; therefore the third hand must be cautious about turning it into a royal unless he has the strength in spades that would justify such a declaration if the spades were hearts. He has no right to count upon the dealer for anything in spades although he has bid a spade.

This is a point that the beginner should keep constantly before him in playing royals. An original spade means nothing further than "I pass."

One great weakness of the player who is just taking up the game of royals seems to be a tendency to make everything a royal that holds out any hope of the odd trick, and he is continually falling into this error of turning the dealer's spade into a royal, just because the dealer said spades, when he would never shift to a heart or a diamond if his spades were red.

In order to correct this fault every player should school himself to regard the original spade call as meaning nothing in spades as well as nothing in anything else, as so many spade declarations are made with only one or two small cards of the suit in the dealer's hand.

In the matter of turning a spade into a royal by the third hand, the new count opens up some considerations that have heretofore never entered into the game at either bridge or auction. There are three principal points:

1. It is generally admitted by all good players that it is useless to assume a dangerous contract when there is no occasion to do so, unless there is a fair prospect of going game if the hand goes right. In other words, there is nothing in trying for the odd trick or two by cards, at the risk of being set up for two or three hundred in penalties.

2. There is no object in forcing an adversary to call two tricks in a suit before you know whether he is able

to call one or not, especially before you have any idea as to which suit he has, if any.

3. If he has a suit and declares it for one trick, no matter which suit it is, you can overcall it for one trick in royals if you think it advisable to do so.

From these considerations may be drawn the following corollary: If the adversaries could beat your contract for one spade, they can beat it for one royal, and the penalty is 50 points a trick in both. If you can win the odd trick at a spade you can win it at a royal; but the difference between nine points and two points is not worth the difference in the risk of unlimited loss instead of the guarantee against more than 100.

So far as the writer's experience goes this conservative handling of possible royals is one of the secrets of success in the new game, as it gives the player with a strong spade suit a double-edged weapon, useful alike for attack and defence. As an example of a hand that is badly managed if the foregoing reasoning is correct, take this case:

♥ Q 4		
♣ 5		
♦ J 10 7 2		
♠ A Q 8 6 5 4		
♥ A J 8 6 5 3	Y	♥ 7 2
♣ J 10 7 6	A	♣ K Q 4 3
♦ 4	Γ	♦ A K Q 5
♠ 3 2	Z	♠ K J 10
♥ K 10 9		
♣ A 9 8 2		
♦ 9 8 6 3		
♠ 9 7		

Z dealt and declared a spade. A passed, and Y, apparently carried away with the idea that he and his partner had all the spades in the pack between them, declared a royal, which every one passed.

Now let us suppose for a moment that Y's spades were hearts, would he be justified in calling a heart on such cards after his partner has declared a spade? Admit, for the sake of argument, that five of his trumps are good for tricks, what are the rest of his cards good for?

Nothing. He might be able to establish a diamond on the fourth round, otherwise he holds seven sure losers. Then what justification has he for stepping outside the pale of safety and declaring a royal? A holds an almost identical hand in hearts, with no weakness shown by his partner, but he passes, because his hand is not up to standard.

In the actual play Y lost only one trick, making four of his trumps, the ace of clubs and the king of hearts, but the point for the student is the application of the corollaries already made. If Y is strong enough to make the odd in spades he will not lose anything on that contract. If he is not strong enough it will cost him no more than to lose his contract in royals.

It is practically impossible to go game with such cards as Y holds when Z has called a spade, because game means winning four by cards at nine a trick. If it is not possible to win the game Y should have passed the spade, upon which he would have heard from B, who would probably have declared a diamond. This Z would have passed, and A would have over-

called with a heart, to show that he could not support the diamond but had a strong heart suit.

Now if Y wants to call a royal he can do so, but he does it with his eyes open, and it will cost him no more than it would have done had he done it blindly on the first round. There is no particular object in calling it, except to drive B to two diamonds, which might be defeated if A is weak in that suit, or to push A to two hearts.

B would lose a trick on his contract to make two in diamonds if Z started with the ace of clubs, and A would just get through with his contract to make two in hearts. According to the principles already laid down neither of these scores would do them any good and they would both be bad contracts to assume after Y had bid a royal. On Y's part, it would show better judgment to let either of the one trick contracts in red stand rather than overcall with a royal which holds out no prospect of going game.

## VI

### ANSWER TO THE TWO-SPADE CALL

One of the most puzzling propositions to the person who takes up royals for the first time is the answer to a two spade call by the dealer. In auction a bid of two spades meant a long strong suit, sufficient to guarantee the odd trick and give a chance to go game if the partner had a sure trick in each of two other suits. Any deficiency in the spade suit itself must be made up with absolute sure tricks outside.

If the dealer could be depended on for the strength that this call required the third hand could often push his no-trumpers to great lengths in the bidding, but the weakness of this two spade call was that so many players were willing to take a chance and were so anxious to drive their partners into a no-trumper that they would declare two spades without the cards to justify it and trust to luck for it to go through.

According to the text-books no two spade bid was sound at auction unless the dealer held the suit solid and could win at least six tricks in it or had an outside ace to make up for the trick the spade suit was shy.

But when the call of two spades was made on a suit which was not solid, the dealer taking a chance on such combinations as ace-king-jack, king-queen-jack or ace-queen-jack, and sometimes even on ace-queen-ten to six in suit, without another trick in the hand that was sure, the bid was exposed to defeat either way.

As a trump declaration it was not good enough to save the contract unless the partner laid down three sure tricks, which is more than his average expectation. If the third hand went no trumps, making the long spade hand the dummy, he would find his plans built upon the sandy soil of an unestablished suit and the whole hand would probably go to pieces.

Few persons realize the difference between a solid spade suit and one that has a hole in it when they are bidding it to induce the partner to try a no-trumper. These coaxers are the hands on which the big losses are made. Here is one in which the writer held Y's cards and which shows how one may be led astray by a dealer that overcalls his hands.

♥ K Q 6	
♦ 8 4	
◊ A 7 6 4 2	
♠ 8 5 3	
♥ 10 5 4	Y
♦ A J 9 6 5 3	A B
◊ Q 8	Z
♠ A 4	
♥ ..... ♦ Q 10 7 2 ◊ J 5 3 ♠ K Q J 10 7 2	♥ A J 9 8 7 3 2 ♦ K ◊ K 10 9 ♠ 9 6

Z dealt on the rubber game, no score, and called two spades. This his cards do not justify, because the suit is not solid and he has no reentry if the ace is held up against him for one or two rounds, a contingency that the beginner always overlooks.

A passed, and Y, with certain winners in two different suits, depending on the dealer for solid spades or spades that one round would clear and with a re-entry to bring them in, called no trumps. B said two hearts. Z and A passed and Y went two no trumps, there being eight tricks marked between the two hands if Z had six spade tricks.

B passed, as he could not see nine tricks with all the spades against him and Y marked with a sure winner in hearts, but A doubled.

There was no escape for Y, who now realized that his partner must have deceived him. The contract failed for five tricks and cost 500 points.

Now let us look at the difference this bid would make in playing royals. As the hand stands Z's original call would be a royal of course, and not two spades, because in royals a two spade bid is never made on length and holds out no promise of a long solid suit, as it did at auction, although it still retains its original meaning as an invitation to the third hand to go no trumps.

To the novice this immediately seems to class it among the dangerous bids, because the dealer will declare two spades on a short suit. According to the principles already laid down for the opening bid the dealer is justified in calling any suit in which he has two sure tricks, but he calls it for one trick only. In order to call two spades he must have an extra trick somewhere. If he has a sure trick outside the spades he may declare two spades on four to the ace king.

"But," immediately objects the novice, "if I had held

such a short spade suit as that and bid two tricks on the hand which you have just illustrated my partner would have come a terrible cropper at no trumps."

At the first blush this seems reasonable, as only two tricks in spades and one outside certainly do not seem any better than a six card suit, even without the ace. But let us rearrange the hands on this understanding, leaving the two that bid against each other, Y's and B's, just as they were, and make Z's hand only four spades to the ace king and one sure trick outside and we shall see that Y's play is safe, because his partner's bidding is not misleading.

♥ K Q 6			
♦ 8 4			
♦ A 7 6 4 2			
♠ 8 5 3			
♥ 10 5	Y	♥ A J 9 8 7 3 2	
♦ J 10 9 6 5 3	A	♦ K	
♦ Q	B	♦ K 10 9	
♠ Q J 4 2	Z	♦ 9 6	
♥ 4			
♦ A Q 7 2			
♦ J 8 5 3			
♠ A K 10 7			

We have given Z the ace of clubs instead of the ten, but have effectually stopped his spade suit in A's hand.

Playing royals, Z bids two spades. Suppose that A passes, although many players would bid a club at royals, the suit being worth six, so that one club will overcall two spades, worth four.

Does Y go no trumps if A passes? Not in royals. He knows, of course, that the spades in his partner's hand are winners, but he knows something else.

He knows that Z holds only four cards in spades.

This is a point that some of our best players seem to overlook the importance of. Z says to Y, "I have two sure tricks in spades and a trick outside." Now let us change the color of this suit for a moment so that the person who is more familiar with auction may see the point clearly. Let us suppose that Z held five hearts to the ace king and a sure trick outside what would he bid?

One heart, of course. Therefore if spades are worth more than hearts, as they are in playing royals, and Z held five spades to the ace king and a sure trick outside he would bid one royal, just as he would bid one heart; not two spades. The two spade bid denies more than three or four spades in his hand.

Understanding this clearly Y's answer to the dealer's two spade bid is not no trumps, but one diamond, because that outside trick is either the king and queen of diamonds or it is in the club suit. Not knowing which, Y bids safe. As the hand was originally dealt Y was banking on his partner for six sure spade tricks. Now he knows he has nothing of the kind.

B bids a heart and Z comes to his partner's assistance with two diamonds, which rather confirms Y's opinion that Z's outside trick is in diamonds. B goes two hearts and Z stops, but Y will go on to three diamonds, so that if B tries three hearts he will be set, and

the most Y can lose is a trick, as he can count eight tricks in sight.

If B goes three hearts he loses 200 points because Z's opening lead would be the trump, having protection in all suits if Y has the diamond. B has nothing to defend by getting out the trumps and would probably lead the club so as to get ready for a cross ruff when A shed his diamond.

Whether B led the club or the spade Z would put Y in with a small diamond, as there is no use leading a jack through a singleton queen. Y would pick up A's trump and come back with the diamond, and all that B would make on the hand would be the odd trick, instead of the nine tricks he contracted for.

If B leaves Y in with the diamond contract Y and Z go game easily as the cards lie, although they could not foresee that result or bid up to it. Against a diamond call B would naturally start with the ace of hearts, and on finding dummy out would follow with a spade or the singleton club. Whichever he did Y would get two rounds of trumps by leading small from dummy.

Another spade from B, or a club if he still has it, and dummy picks up the ten of trumps. The club queen gets rid of Y's eight. Y ruffs the third club and gives Z two spade discards on his two top hearts and ruffs the fourth club himself, so that the only tricks for A and B are the heart ace and the king of trumps.

What has Z lost by bidding two spades on a short suit, the hands of Y and B being left as they were? Winning five by cards and the rubber in diamonds, or getting 200 in penalties against a heart contract, is

quite a different story from losing 500 points at no trumps through being misled by the dealer's opening declaration.

"But why," asks the novice, "is this not a good hand at no trumps for Y and Z when Z's opening bid is honest, just as it would have been in the first distribution if Z had had the spade suit solid, as he should have had?"

As the cards lie, Y could have gone game at no trumps, but it would have been a speculation, because he has no means of telling in which of two suits his partner's outside trick lies. If it is in diamonds and the clubs are all against them, B would probably avoid a heart opening when Y showed the suit stopped, and if he started with a club the result might be unpleasant. It is only because it is in clubs and not in diamonds that Z has the trick outside spades that the no-trumper would work.

The point for the beginner to remember is, that a two trick call by the dealer in spades, when properly handled by his partner, is just as safe in royals as a one trick call would be in any suit other than spades. Both leave the safety limit of penalties behind them and both take a certain amount of risk, but neither can come to any such pass as to lose 500 points at a crack.

When the third hand pays close attention to the bidding, especially when the second hand makes a declaration, he will sometimes be able to gauge the dealer's hand very accurately on a two spade call. Take this case:

♥ A Q 8 5		
♦ A 9 7 6 2		
♦ 8		
♦ 8 7 2		
♥ K J 10 4	Y	♥ 9 7 6 3
♣ J	A B	♣ 8 5 3
♦ A K Q 9 7 5	Z	♦ 10 6
♠ 4 3		♠ Q J 10 5
♥ 2		
♦ K Q 10 4		
♦ J 4 3 2		
♦ A K 9 6		

Z dealt and called two spades, which A went over with one diamond. Y knows from his own holding in hearts that Z cannot have any outside trick in that suit, and from the adversary's call in diamonds, which must be a solid suit to justify a free bid, that Z's outside trick is the king and queen of clubs.

With this inference to guide him Y overcalls the diamond with two clubs. As A can ruff the clubs on the second round and has good supporting hearts he goes on to two tricks in diamonds and Y confidently declares three clubs.

Y figures that his own clubs combined with his partner's should be good for five tricks in trumps. Two sure spade tricks are shown and Y has at least one sure heart trick. A declined to go further as he knew he could not possibly win the game, as two spade tricks and a club must be lost, and it is useless to take a risk on a hand that cannot go game.

On the play of the club contract Y managed to go

game by following the principle so often insisted upon in these pages, that it is useless to lead trumps unless you have a suit to defend which is otherwise worthless. Y has not more than two possible tricks in any suit.

B opened with the ten of diamonds and led another, which Y ruffed. Y then put Z in with a spade, so that he might take a finesse in hearts. When the queen held, he led the ace, dummy discarding a spade, and then a third round of hearts was trumped by Z.

Dummy led a diamond, and the nine of trumps shut out B's eight. A fourth heart was ruffed by Z and Y trumped another diamond with the ace, B discarding spades. When Y put Z in again with a spade Z led his two winning trumps so that all B could get was the last trick with his eight.

## VII

### ANSWER TO THE BID OF ONE ROYAL

Just as the third player has to be careful in his inferences as to the possibilities of his partner's hand when the dealer starts with a bid of two spades, so he will have to be cautious about his answer to an original call of one royal, because it is usually dangerous to interfere with a bid of such value that it comes next to a no-trumper and takes two tricks in anything else to overcall it.

The dealer who starts with a royal announces that he holds enough of the suit to be willing to play for the odd trick with spades for trumps, and that even if his partner has a better call, which would be no trumps, he would prefer to have such strength laid down on the table in his dummy as an assistance to his spade suit.

In this respect the royal differs widely from the regular bids of one trick in hearts or diamonds, which used to be called the winning suits. A player will call one heart or one diamond with only four cards in the suit if two of them are the ace and king, and he will call it if he has only three, provided they are the top honors, even if there is not another trick in the hand.

He does not want to play hearts for trumps, as it is probably the worst suit he could pick for such a purpose, but he wants to show his partner where his strength lies, so that the third hand may shape his course accordingly.

As a recent writer puts it: "To understand the reason for bidding on short suits headed by winners in preference to long suits without them one must keep continually in view that the first round of the bidding is for the purpose of leading up to a no-trumper if possible, and that when a player has not a no-trumper himself he still hopes for one in his partner's hand, and accordingly gives all the information he can as to his real strength. But the strength wanted in a no-trumper is not six cards to a ten, but aces and kings. Even queens are of no value in original bids."

The only way in which the dealer can show in his original call that he wants hearts or diamonds for trumps, and that his cards in the suit are not good enough to be of any assistance to a no-trumper, is to declare two tricks in the suit at once. The conventional meaning attached to such an opening declaration, when made by a good player, is: "Let me alone, no matter what you have."

But few players care to assume the unnecessary trick on a blind bid, and the general custom with the red suits is to start with one trick and to be ready to overcall with two tricks in case the partner goes no trumps. The persistence in returning to the suit first declared shows the third hand the difference between the hand with the short suit and winning cards, and the long suit with smaller cards, marking the distinction between an invitation to him to go no trumps and a wish to name the trump suit from your own hand.

While this system avoids the unnecessary risk of a two trick call at the start, it may prove difficult to carry

out the theory if the partner turns out to be not the only bidder, because there is no way of setting him right after giving him a wrong impression at the start, except by repeating the call in the suit, regardless of expense.

The great objection to this system is the misleading of the partner by a bid that may mean either one of two things when a red suit is named, and which is not clear to him until the second round, and then only if he overcalls and is overcalled in turn. In order that the student may understand clearly how this system of bidding red suits differs from the system of bidding royals, here is a rather curious example of the misunderstandings that the old auction system of bidding on the winning suits sometimes led to:

♥ 6						
♦ Q J 10 3 2						
◊ 8						
♠ A K Q J 5 4						
♥ 8 3						
♦ 9 8 6 4						
◊ J 4						
♠ 10 8 7 6 2						
	Y		V A K 10 7 5 2			
	A	B		♦ K 7		
	Z			◊ A K 5		
	♥ Q J 9 4			♠ 9 3		
	♠ A 5					
	◊ Q 10 9 7 6 3 2					
	♠ .....					

Z dealt and started with a diamond, intending to overcall with two diamonds if his partner went no trumps. A passed and Y did go no trumps, reckoning

on Z for the winning diamonds and taking a chance on the heart suit.

B overcalled with two hearts, which prevented Z from declaring two in diamonds and suggested to him that it would be better to show Y that he had the hearts stopped twice by doubling, which is what Z did.

When it got round to Y the situation seemed clear enough to him. He had a spade suit that should be good for six tricks and he has the clubs safe. Z has one or two sure tricks in diamonds, shown by his opening bid, and has the hearts stopped twice, shown by his double.

This being the situation, Y has a sure game hand at no trumps and sees no object in letting the double stand, so he overcalls with two no trumps.

At this point B saw his advantage. If he doubles the two no trumps he will probably frighten Z back into four diamonds (this being played at the old count), and he can then double that and defeat it if Z is the player who is long in both the red suits, because he can exhaust Y's trumps and then make his two hearts, setting the contract in the first four tricks played.

Z did not see any need of pulling his partner out of the no-trumper, and had no idea that Y's bids were all based on Z holding the winning diamonds, so the hand was played with Y as the declarer and the contract was set for 200 points.

B started with the hearts, and as soon as he saw that dummy had no spades to lead he went right on with a third heart, putting Z in. Y saw that either way he played the club suit he would block it unless he could

catch the king with the ace, so he took a chance on that and then led the small club, which allowed B to force his last heart.

Had Z led the diamond instead of the club, as the cards lie, A would have held the trick with the jack and would have come right back with it, as B would be marked with both ace and king, while the spades are an uncertainty. This would have brought about the same result as the club lead. As it was, B made his king of clubs, cleared the hearts and made seven tricks on the hand.

The loss on this contract is due to Z's reluctance to bid two diamonds at the start and his not having the opportunity to do it later, B's bid forcing him to three tricks. For the dealer to make things perfectly clear to his partner at the start there is only one way to bid the so-called winning suits, and that is to call one trick with the sure trick-taking cards, and to call two tricks with the long weak suits.

But when we come to the spade suit in royals, the bidding is exactly reversed. We bid two tricks in the cheap suit, spades, when we have the winning cards and no length, which leaves the partner free to overcall with as cheap a bid as one trick in anything. We bid only one trick on the length, which forces the partner to let us alone unless he is willing to go as far as two tricks in his own suit.

To illustrate the difference this makes let us take the foregoing hand and transpose the two important suits, diamonds and spades, which will give this distribution:

♥ 6			
♦ Q J 10 3 2			
♦ A K Q J 5 4			
♠ 8			
♥ 8 3	Y	♥ A K 10 7 5 2	
♦ 9 8 6 4	A B	♦ K 7	
♦ 10 8 7 6 2	Z	♦ 9 3	
♠ J 4		♦ A K 5	
♥ Q J 9 4			
♦ A 5			
♦ .....			
♦ Q 10 9 7 6 3 2			

Instead of being forced to declare two tricks in an expensive suit in order to show that it is long and not headed by winning cards Z calls only one royal. In this case Y, knowing the meaning of the bid, is warned against a no-trumper, because his partner does not promise to win a single trick in anything unless his spades are trumps.

Some players would overcall the royal with two diamonds, but that is a mistake. If B bids two hearts, Z will overcall with two royals, and his partner is still in no doubt about the hand upon which the declaration is made. If B leads trumps to protect his heart suit, which is a common artifice, Z will make three by cards.

In the red suits, it is conventional for the third hand to overcall his partner when he cannot support the suit named by the dealer, but has a good red suit of his own, which is useful only as a trump suit and would be of no assistance in a no-trumper and therefore not of much help in carrying out the contract on royals.

Players who are careful in their inferences from the bidding will find many opportunities to avail themselves of this information, conveyed by overcalling. As an example take this case:

♥ Q J 9 7 4 3	
♣ K 10 6 5	
♦ Q 8 7	
♠ .....	
♥ K 2	Y
♣ A Q J 9 2	A B
♦ 9 3	Z
♠ J 9 6 4	
♥ 10 8 6	♥ A 5
♣ 4	♣ 8 7 3
♦ A 5 2	♦ K J 10 6 4
♠ K 10 8 7 5 3	♠ A Q 2

Z dealt and started with one royal. A passed and Y overcalled with two hearts. B went two no trumps, having both the adversaries' suits stopped. Instead of bidding three royals, which many hasty players would do with Z's cards Z infers that his partner cannot help him in the spade suit and that his hearts are long and weak, because if his hearts were trick winners Y would support the spade suit as a royal.

If Y has nothing in spades he must have sufficient hearts to justify overcalling, and as Z has three hearts himself they should have eight or nine between them, and if that is the case the heart is a better proposition than the royal, so Z overcalls B's two no trumps with three hearts.

At this point A, who holds the only suit that has not been called except the diamonds, and who knows that must be his partner's strength and also that B has both the called suits stopped, goes to B's assistance with three no trumps, whereupon Y and Z both refuse to cross the danger line of a four trick contract.

On the play Y and Z set the no-trumper for three tricks. Z led his partner's suit, hearts, and B let it come up to the ace, so as to take a club finesse. Y won the club trick and cleared the hearts.

On the third round of clubs A found himself blocked by the ten in Y's hand, and as he had no reentry it was useless to clear the suit, so he shifted to the diamonds, leading the nine and ducking it. Z won with the ace and led a third heart, Y making the rest of that suit and the ten of clubs.

Here is an illustration of a case in which the third hand should have refused to overcall his partner's royal, although he has not a spade in his hand:

♥ 9 6		
♣ J 7 5 3		
♦ A K Q 10 6 4 3		
♠ .....		
♥ Q 8 7	Y	♥ K 10 5 4.
♣ A K 6 4	A B	♣ Q 10 8 2
♦ 9 2		♦ 7 5
♠ A 7 6 3	Z	♠ Q 9 4
♥ A J 3 2		
♣ 9		
♦ J 8		
♠ K J 10 8 5 2		

Z dealt and declared one royal. A passed and Y called two in diamonds, which every one passed. With any play he makes his contract; with the best play he makes three by cards, but at the same time he loses the game, because for two reasons he had no right to overcall his partner.

In the first place diamonds are not worth as much as royals and it will take a trick more, new count, to go game. In the second place, if diamonds are trumps the long spade suit is worthless for trick winning, unless it is headed by winning cards, which Y does not know anything about, whereas the diamond suit is a great fighting factor if there is a long trump suit in the other hand to support it.

Y's overcalling his partner leads Z into thinking that Y's diamonds are long and weak, with no help in spades, so he lets the bid stand. B led a heart and Z put the ace right on, leading the singleton club. To save his partner's heart suit and his own ace of clubs and to kill the spades A led a trump, which Y won, so as to give Z a ruff in clubs.

Y then trumped himself in on a spade and led the nine of hearts, which B won with the king, so as to make sure of the trick. B led a spade and Y had to lose two club tricks at the end. On this play he made a trick more than he would have done had he not led the singleton club when he did.

Had Y left the royal declaration alone neither A nor B would have interfered with it. If either did interfere Y should have supported it, instead of shifting. This would give A the opening lead and he would play

the king and ace of clubs, Z ruffing the second round and leading the ten of trumps to get two for one. As there is no danger of losing the ace A would naturally let this trick go up to B.

Now if B comes with a heart, he can save a trick, but he would undoubtedly follow the more natural play and force Z again with a club, leading the queen. Z would ruff and lead trumps again until he forced out A's ace.

If A put the ace of trumps right on, as he should, his play would be to kill that diamond suit at once by leading it before Z gets all the trumps out. Z would let the trick come round to his jack, pull the trumps and return the diamond, making every other trick and the game, as all that A and B get out of it is a club and two trumps.

The rule would seem to be, so far as present experience with the game of royals goes, that the third hand should overcall when he has a long weak suit of his own and nothing in spades to support his partner, because while he has no spades, his partner may have several of the suit the third hand calls.

But if the third hand holds the winning cards in his suit, he should let the royal stand, even if he has no spades to support it, because if he shifts, he may be reducing the spade suit to one of no value and at the same time be taking on an extra trick contract for a cheaper suit.

## VIII

### ANSWER TO THE SUIT CALLS

The case in which the dealer himself names spades, either for one trick and safety; for two tricks with short strength, or for a royal and length, have already been considered. But the great mass of declarations by the dealer, amounting to nearly 60 per cent., are those in which he does not mention the spade suit at all, and these are the ones that require careful handling by the third player under the new count.

According to the principles already laid down as a basis if the dealer declares one trick in any suit other than spades he should have at least two sure tricks in that suit, or tricks enough outside to make up for whatever is lacking in the suit itself.

This is not an arbitrary rule, because, as already pointed out, any player is at liberty to declare on less or to refuse to declare on so little. But the point for the good player to remember is that if he changes the unit of measurement by which his declarations are to be sized up he must change the unit of measurement by which he estimates the value of his partner's answer.

The greatest danger in the declarations of the third hand lies in the foundations upon which they are built. There is nothing that will so rapidly and surely discourage a player who is conscientiously trying to acquire a sound style as to find the bottom continually falling out of his game, because it is standing upon a declaration by the dealer which is not sound.

Among the most common of the dealer's faults there are two that stand out conspicuously from the rest. The first is an original call of a suit that does not contain the necessary winning cards to justify it. The second is taking chances on "near" no-trumpers.

The great fault in the second class is that of forgetting that the declaration is not final. If the hand were certain to be played at no trumps, just because the dealer said so, as at bridge, these sporty no-trumpers would be in many cases excusable; but when they are simply the cornerstone upon which other bids will be built up and the partner will be placing his chief dependence on them, they are unsound in principle and unsafe in practice.

Here is an example which recently came under the writer's notice that shows how completely the dealer may sometimes lead his partner astray in calling one of these near no-trumpers, when he has a legitimate call in a suit. As all suits have a chance for the game under the new count, the error is the less excusable.

♥ K J 3		
♣ 10 3		
♦ J		
♠ A K J 10 6 3 2		
♥ 9 5		
♣ Q J 8 6 4 2		
♦ 10 7 5 4		
♠ 9		
	Y	♥ 10 7 6 2
	A B	♣ A 9 5
	Z	♦ A 8 3
		♠ Q 8 4
♥ A Q 8 4		
♣ K 7		
♦ K Q 9 6 2		
♠ 7 5		

Z dealt at the score of love all, rubber game, and called one no trump on the theory that his hand was a king above average and protected in three suits. Now for the benefit of the beginner it may be explained that the hand is not protected in three suits, because there is no protection in clubs unless that suit is led, therefore the call is not sound and should have been a diamond.

A passed the no-trumper, as he has no chance to make two by cards against it, to say nothing of winning the game, and there is no necessity to show his partner what to lead, as he has the lead himself.

Y felt quite proud of the assistance that he could give the no-trumper, as it looked promising for a grand slam. He bases his hopes on the assurance that his partner has three suits safe, and these must be hearts, diamonds and clubs.

When B passed A led his fourth best club and B put on the ace and returned the nine. Z can see his contract on the table, one club in hand, four hearts and two spades sure. If the spade queen falls he makes a little slam, so he starts the spades, but fails to catch the queen in two rounds.

Instead of taking the odd trick and his contract he thought it better to risk the clubs in A's hand. With either two in B's or no more he still gets his contract, so he went on with the spade, as the hearts in dummy are a sure re-entry.

B's queen won the third round of spades, and he at once returned the club, Z discarding a diamond. On the queen and jack of clubs, B echoed in diamonds, so

that A should lead that suit after the clubs were gone, and so they set the no-trump contract for 50 points.

With nine red cards and two unprotected suits, Z should have started with a diamond, especially as that will encourage his partner to show what he has in either of the black suits, especially spades, because it is well understood that the dealer's first call of a suit does not mean that he wants it for the trump by any means but rather that he is leading up to something better.

Had Z bid a diamond, Y would have at once over-called with one royal, and they would have made five by cards to a certainty, unless B led out both his aces at the start, because if B leads a heart, Y will get two rounds of trumps and then lead hearts, getting a diamond discard on the fourth round. At no trump Z loses 50 in honors, aces easy. At royals, he wins five by cards at 9 a trick, four honors in one hand, and 250 for the rubber, a difference of 417 points.

Here is a hand in which the dealer's no-trumper is a perfectly legitimate call, but the third hand forgets that such calls are not invincible and that the dealer has to say something.

♥ 4 3 2	
♣ J 10 6 4	
♦ 8	
♠ Q 10 4 3 2	
♥ J 9 6 5	Y
♣ A K 3 2	A
♦ Q J 9 7	B
♠ J	Z
♥ A 7	
♣ Q 9 5	
♦ A 5 4 2	
♠ A K 7 6	

Z dealt and called no trumps, which all passed. Now, according to the theory of probabilities, the dealer who bids to make the odd trick, which is to win seven out of thirteen, has a right to expect to find his partner with his share of the remaining six, which is two tricks. If the third hand does not hold two tricks he should, if possible, warn the dealer that the expected assistance will not be forthcoming.

Some very good players believe it pays to warn the dealer with any good four card suit, while others refuse to overcall with less than five in suit. The average player seems to shrink from the responsibility of the extra trick which is required in overcalling a no-trumper with a suit and prefer to leave the dealer to his fate.

But the point which is continually overlooked by the third hand, even among good players, is the availability of a trump suit for winning tricks. To get action on the trumps there must be a suit they can be used upon.

Even five trumps may be of little use if the holder has to follow suit to everything at least twice, because the trumps cannot be brought into action until the fight is all over. But when there is a short suit, or a missing suit in the hand, four or five trumps immediately increase in trick-taking value.

The rule would seem to be that when you have a singleton, or a missing suit, four or five trumps are worth a great deal more than they would be otherwise, and there is much more reason for declaring them.

Knowing this, Y should have overcalled the dealer's no-trumper with two royals, showing that unless his spades were trumps his hand was below the average expectation of two tricks. With spades as trumps, it would come up to average.

As it was the hand was played as a no-trumper and all Z could get out of it was his contract for the odd trick. A led a diamond and Z ran off his five spade tricks. He then tried to clear his clubs, letting A in to make three diamonds. B won the fourth diamond with the ten and led the king of hearts, so that all Z made was five spades and two aces.

Had Y overcalled with two royals B would have led the king of hearts and Z would have pulled down all the trumps, leaving Y in the lead on the third round. At this point the beginner would probably make the mistake of leading the singleton, which is forcing himself; but the correct play would be to lead the clubs while there are still two re-entries to bring them in. To lead the diamond would cost two tricks.

When A wins the first club he can return either of

the red suits without affecting the result, as Z can ruff the third heart and Y would ruff the second diamond, and no matter which suit got in, the heart or diamond, Z would lead the club and clear it, going game either way.

It will sometimes happen that when the third hand overcalls a no-trumper the no-trumper will overcall him again. Under such circumstances, if the dealer is a good player, his second call is a feeler, and it is one of the most useful conventions in the new count.

Put yourself in the dealer's position with a fair no-trumper and it will be clear that if you have declared no trumps and your partner has overcalled you with two royals there is nothing in his declaration that shows whether his spade suit is long and strong or simply long, because he would bid two royals in either case if the rest of his hand were a bust.

By going back to his no-trumper the dealer says to his partner, "If you have winning cards in spades, as well as length, let me alone. If only length, overcall me again."

Here is a rather interesting hand that recently came under the writer's notice which illustrates the working out of this principle at the card table:

♥ 6 5 3 2	
♦ 5 2	
♦ 7 6	
♠ A J 7 5 3	
♥ 10 7	Y
♦ J 10 9	A
♦ Q J 4 3 2	B
♦ 8 4 2	Z
♥ K Q J 8 4	
♦ Q 8 7 4	
♦ K 10 5	
♦ 9	
♥ A 9	
♦ A K 6 3	
♦ A 9 8	
♦ K Q 10 6	

Z dealt and bid one no trump. Y overcalled with two royals. In the face of this B did not like the looks of a three heart contract, although he could ruff the spades, so he passed. Z went back to two no trumps.

This is putting the question to Y: "Are your spades good for tricks or only for trumps?"

Y's answer is silence. This means: "My spades are good for a sure trick at least," because with five spades to the jack he would overcall again with three royals.

In this hand Z knows just what he is doing. If his partner holds the ace of spades to five in suit, Z goes game, even if the rest of Y's hand is a bust. But if Y has not the spade ace the adversaries may clear either of the red suits on the first lead, Y having nothing outside spades, and when they get in with the spade ace they will save the game before Z ever gets another lead.

If any intelligent player will think this over the logic of the situation must be clear. Even if the red suit

that is opened has only five cards in it, if the ace of spades is against Z, it will bring in four tricks in that red suit and that saves the game; but if dummy lays down the ace of spades at the head of five in suit, the game is a certainty for Z, no matter what is led, unless A or B hold four to the jack.

## IX

### COMBINING THE HANDS IN DECLARING

One great advantage of the new count lies in its elasticity. It gives the dealer a chance to chip in and wait, so as not to lose his entire interest in the pool they are bidding for. He can generally bid a trick in anything that he has in his hand, without fear of being left with it.

This is true of all one trick bids except a royal. In other suits it is probable that among good players not more than one bid in three expresses any desire to have the suit named selected finally for the trump. Such calls are made in the hope that the partner has something better.

Poor auction players, of course, who do not understand that the philosophy of bidding is to lead up to something beyond what the individual hand shows and who are mostly recruited from the ranks of equally poor bridge players, will be found to persist in declaring suits they would like to have for the trump, but their bids are all based on their own cards and they are completely oblivious to the strength of the bidding that combines the two hands as one.

To this class belong all those who declare a heart with such cards as five to the king ten and a trick outside, often a doubtful trick at that. As long as they persist in this style of bidding, for them there is no salvation, because they are not playing auction at all,

but bridge, and instead of being a partner to the player opposite them, they are an enemy. The players they are actually helping are the adversaries.

But the declarations of a good player, who can be depended on for two sure tricks in any suit he names but spades, afford something to build on. If he has not two tricks in the suit itself, he has one in it and one in another suit. He does not say he has five or six cards in the suit. He does not say he would like to have that suit for trumps. All he says is that he has two sure tricks in his hand, and at least one of them is in the suit named.

He is never without the sure trick in the suit he calls.

The importance of this point is often completely overlooked. Some persons will argue that as long as the dealer has two sure tricks in anything it is not necessary for either of them to be in the suit named, and they make this their excuse for declaring diamonds with five to the jack, holding three little hearts and two black aces on the side. The correct opening bid on all such hands is one club.

In the old game of auction, when the dealer declared a suit, it was seldom that his partner had any choice in the matter of overcalling. The principle laid down in the text-books referred to the red, or winning suits. If the third hand could not support his partner in diamonds but had a good heart suit of his own, he would overcall the diamond with a heart, because while he might have none of the diamond suit his partner might have two or three hearts. This principle is so important that it can never be too often insisted upon.

But in playing the new count with royals there is frequently a choice, and good judgment shown in the exercise of this choice will usually decide the fate of a hand or of the game and rubber. Take this case:

♥ A Q 6 4 2		
♦ K 6 3		
◊ .....		
♠ K 9 8 7 5		
♥ K 10 9 7 3	Y	♥ J 8
♦ J 10 9	A B	♦ A Q 8
◊ 10 7 4 3	Z	◊ Q J 9 5 2
♠ 3		♠ A Q 6
♥ 5		
♦ 7 5 4 2		
◊ A K 8 6		
♠ J 10 4 2		

Z dealt and bid a diamond, which A passed. Y went no trumps, on the theory that if his partner had the diamonds they had everything between them. This would be all right if Y had no better declaration, but he has a choice of three, and picks the most unsafe of all.

In spite of the original declaration B led his long diamond suit and Z won the first trick with the king. Y then tried a king-jack-ten finesse in spades, letting B in again to clear his diamonds.

Still having reentries, Y continued the spade, A discarding a small heart. B now led a small diamond for the third round, putting A in but refusing to overtake the fourth diamond, so that when A won Z's six with the seven and led the ten B played low and left A

with the lead. This made A stop to consider his partner's reason for refusing to win the ten with the jack and make the nine.

When a good player does something that you do not expect him to do there is always a reason for it. His reason may not be a good one, but he has one, and if you will make it a point to stop and figure it out it may save you a great many tricks in the course of a year.

A came to the conclusion that the reason for leaving him in the lead was to force him to lead some suit through Y so that B should get the play after the declarer. This must be a suit in which B holds one of two things, a tenace, ace and queen, or a guarded king. Which is it, and what is the suit? That is the problem for A, and the position is interesting and instructive.

If B has the ace and queen of hearts it does not matter what A leads. B cannot have the guarded king in that suit, because A has the king himself. Y has discarded three hearts and a spade, so B has major tenace or nothing. But in clubs B might have either the tenace or the king guarded, and no matter which it is, the lead of the supporting jack from A's hand will be a useful card, so A tries it.

For the last three tricks B put Y in with a spade, compelling him to lead away from his tenace in hearts, so the contract was set for three tricks, one of which was due to Y's discard of a spade in his attempt to keep the king of clubs twice guarded.

After the hand Z found fault with his partner for not making it a heart instead of no trumps, but the heart contract would have likewise failed for three

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tricks, because B would then have opened with a trump, which is always the best play when you have every suit protected and they are all bad suits to lead away from, such as suits headed by two honors not in sequence. But for the original call B might have led a diamond.

Y would win the jack of trumps with the queen and would probably think he might as well get two for one, as there is no way of getting dummy in the lead for a spade finesse. This is Y's best play, so as to get rid of the lead and get one of his kings led up to or get dummy in with the diamonds. If Y plays ace and then small, the trick goes to A.

Knowing from his partner's opening with a trump that B must be protected in all the plain suits, A would try the jack of clubs as a feeler. The moment that held the trick, A would pull both of Y's trumps and B would let go a diamond and a spade, having already discarded one diamond.

This would allow B to win the third club trick and establish his diamond nine by leading that suit twice and getting in twice with his spade tenace, which shows that even had Y called a heart he would have been set for three tricks on the contract, just as he was at no trumps.

The correct overcall with Y's cards is a royal, for two reasons outside the always present possibility that the dealer may have something in spades but not be willing to bid two tricks on it. Y's spades are good for nothing unless they are trumps, whereas his hearts are potential trick winners either way. If Z has not two tricks in the diamond suit itself his outside trick

must be in one of the black suits, as it cannot be in hearts, and if it is in either of the black suits Z gets in and Y gets discards on the diamonds.

Played as a royal Y goes game with four by cards, no matter what B leads, as Z can always get in with his trumps. Suppose B starts with a diamond, as he cannot afford to lead trumps from a tenace. Dummy puts on the king and Y discards a club. Another winning diamond and Y discards another club. A third round of diamonds, and Y gets rid of the last club. After that, the only tricks left for A and B are the ace and queen of trumps, let them play as they may.

There has been considerable discussion as to what the third hand should do when the dealer starts with a two trick call in a red suit, showing that it is not headed by winning cards, but is long and weak, and the third hand has none of the suit, but has a spade suit which is long enough to overcall with.

There are two ways of looking at the question. As a rule an original two trick call by the dealer in any suit but spades means "Let me alone, no matter what you have." But this is usually taken as referring to a possible no-trumper, not to a better suit call. If a dealer calls two diamonds and third hand has no diamonds, but holds six average hearts, it is conventional for him to overcall, because the dealer may have two or three hearts, making eight or nine trumps between the two hands.

Many good players maintain, however, that if the suit held by the third hand has winning cards in it he should let the dealer alone, because an original declara-

tion of two tricks shows there are no winning cards in the suit as a suit, and if the trump is changed the whole suit will be worthless so far as taking tricks with it is concerned.

But there is another view of the case. If that suit is left as the trump and all the high trumps are against it there are just so many tricks that are certain to be lost, and if the player who overcalls has nothing but the suit with which he takes his partner out, unsupported by reentries, he may never make anything out of it after all.

Such hands do not often come up, but when they do they are likely to make a change in the state of the score if they are not properly handled. On the whole it seems better to overcall with a strong suit than with a weak one, and it is usually easier to ruff out the suit that is overcalled than it is to get down all the big trumps by knocking two for one.

Here is a hand which illustrates how differently the two ways of looking at the situation may affect the result, depending on whether the original two trick call is left alone or third hand overcalls it with a strong royal.

♥	.....	
♦	Q 6 5 2	
♦	8 7 3	
♦	A K Q 6 4 2	
♥	K Q 10	Y
♣	A K 9 7	A B
♦	10 6 2	Z
♦	10 8 5	
♥	J 9 7 6 5 4 2	♥ A 8 3
♣	8 4 3	♣ J 10
♦	A K	♦ Q J 9 5 4
♦	3	♦ J 9 7

Z dealt and declared two hearts. Y, having no hearts, but thinking his strong spade suit would be a good one to win tricks after the trumps were gone, passed the two hearts and the hand was played that way, A to lead.

A led three rounds of clubs, B ruffing the third and leading queen of diamonds. As Z could see nothing in leading a spade, as he had nothing to discard, he led a trump, and A put on the ten second hand, holding the trick. Then he led another club, which B ruffed with the ace, after which A had to make two tricks with the king and queen of trumps, setting the contract for 100 points, as Z made only six tricks on his contract to make eight.

If Y had overcalled the two hearts with two royals it is true that he cannot accomplish anything by ruffing out the heart suit, because Z cannot get in often enough. If he had one more re-entry the hand would be a grand slam for Y at royals. But once in on the diamond, which would be B's opening

lead if Y were the declarer, Y can ruff a heart, lead back a diamond, ruff another heart and then let Z ruff the third round of diamonds, but Y could see that would not go game on the hand.

The right play of the hand for Y when Z wins the first trick with the king of diamonds would be to lead a club, because that suit is just as long as the heart suit, seven cards between the two hands, and it has a re-entry. A would put on the king, betraying the position of the ace, and then no matter what A led Y must make the queen of clubs good, even if B gets in a ruff on the third round.

The only thing that would stop Y from going game on the hand would be a trump lead, which A would not be likely to make if his partner dropped the ten of clubs on the first lead. To make his ace and force looks simpler. It would take a very good player to foresee that dummy would make two club leads by ruffing the third diamond.

As a rule it would seem that it is not wise to leave the dealer in with a long weak suit when you have a long strong suit to overcall with. The position seems to be much the same as choosing between the two suits in the one hand, and there is always the chance of ruffing out a long suit with the small trumps and winning tricks with the big ones.

One point in favor of the contract that is backed up with the winning trumps is that it cannot be set back very much, while the weak trump suit may be; but the whole question is one that hinges so much on the rest of the hand that it is hardly one to be dogmatic about.

## X

### DEALER'S DEFENCE WITH WEAK HANDS

Since the introduction of the new count many persons have naturally been led to ask whether or not the dealer is recommended to abandon the old system of communication between himself and his partner which was used by so many in playing auction, no reference to the dealer's defensive tactics having been so far made in outlining the system of play that is intended to meet the new conditions of the count.

The answer to this is that such a system is no longer necessary because the conditions that it was designed to meet no longer exist. In auction there were only two fighting suits, hearts and diamonds, the black suits being held in reserve for one of two purposes—to help out a no-trumper in the partner's hand or to defeat a declaration of the adversaries.

The whole strategy of the game was then directed toward the no-trumper, because half the hand was no good for a suit call, and the system of communication between the partners was chiefly aimed at showing each other what they had that would be useful if there were no trumps to interfere with it.

That is to say everything was subordinated to showing aces and kings because they were good for tricks whether they were trumps or not. Trump declarations were usually a last resort and frequently left entirely to the second round of the bids.

Up to a certain point the system worked smoothly enough and had the great recommendation of simplicity. If the dealer did not want to play the hand, having no good declaration in his cards, he would name any suit in which he had at least one sure trick on the chance or in the hope that his partner might have the remaining two-thirds of the required strength for a no-trump declaration.

If the dealer wanted to play the hand himself, having a good declaration of any kind in his own cards but no certainty of the game, instead of giving information he invited it and made it as easy as possible for his partner to give it by calling one spade. This put his partner under obligations to show any suit in which he had a sure trick, confident that the dealer had a good declaration of some kind and would make it after he had found out what was in the hand that would become his dummy. If the third hand had nothing he was compelled to call two spades and the dealer shaped his course accordingly.

So far as intelligent declaring went, that part of the system was perfect, but the hitch in it arose when neither of the conditions mentioned existed in the dealer's hand; when he not only had no good declaration on his own cards but no sure trick in anything to show his partner.

In such cases the dealer had to defend himself not only against the attacks of the adversaries but from the criticisms of his partner, who would justly complain if he were misled. If the dealer called a spade, that meant he had a good declaration of some kind in his

own hand and forced his partner to take him out of it. When he had not a trick in his hand this was fatal. If he declared a suit in which he was long but weak his partner built up a series of bids on the belief that the dealer had sure tricks in the suit called, which was also fatal.

The only way out of this was to make use of the call that the dealer never used unless he had the game in his own hand, and that was no trumps. This said to the partner, "Sit still and say nothing unless you can do it all yourself, because I have nothing to show and do not want any information from you."

Somehow or other this always went against the grain with the hardened bridge player, who could not rid himself of the idea that he was putting his neck into a noose every time he bid no trumps without a trick in his hand. This in spite of the fact that experience went to show he would not be left with the declaration more than one time in ten unless his partner had the no-trumper.

For the third hand to overcall one of these fake no-trumpers he would have to bid two tricks in a red suit or three tricks in clubs or six in spades. As there is no reason why he should have one suit more than another he had to average up 13—2 hearts, 2 diamonds, 3 clubs, 6 spades. Under the new count two in anything will overcall, which average up 8 only, as against 13.

As a rule when the dealer started out with one no trump under the old system without a trick in his hand it was found either that the adversaries were strong enough to overcall him with a red suit or the partner

had enough to save the no-trumper from serious damage. The catastrophes came when the adversaries did not have enough red strength in one hand or did not care to overcall. When that happened the dealer and his partner were defenceless.

Take this hand as an example of how differently the two systems of counting affect the declarations which are, strictly speaking, defensive on the dealer's part:

♥ 5			
♦ Q 10 7			
◆ A 9 2			
♠ K J 8 7 6 4			
♥ Q 10 4 2	Y	♥ A K 8 6	
♦ 3	A	♦ A K 6	
◆ K Q J 8 3	B	♦ 10 7 5 4	
♠ 10 9 3	Z	♠ A 5	
♥ J 9 7 3			
♦ J 9 8 5 4 2			
◆ 6			
♠ Q 2			

Z was playing under the old system of defence and called no trumps, as he had not a trick in his hand. Nine players out of ten, knowing Z was so weak, would have called two diamonds on A's cards, "just to show partner," as they used to express it, that being the old bridge idea of the game. This would have let Z out, and Y would have promptly passed. B would have lifted the diamond to two no trumps and made the game unless Z happened to open the spade and get the suit cleared before his partner played the ace of diamonds.

But in this particular case A did not declare his diamonds, having learned the lesson not to risk any free bids as second hand unless you have a chance to win the game. Y could do nothing but sit tight and hope for the best for the no-trumper, which might get through on the spade suit. B, having nothing but a no-trumper himself, thought he would have a few penalties, so he doubled and there was no escape for Z except the clubs, and to undertake nine tricks in clubs with a no-trumper against him is not a promising avenue of escape.

Had Z shifted to clubs the contract would have been set for 300 points. As it was the no-trumper went down for 500, owing to the good fortune of A getting his diamonds cleared before Y got to work on the spades.

Some of the bystanders thought that Z should have called the clubs at the start, instead of no trumps, and then if the third hand overcalled with no trumps to go three clubs, which was then a common system of correcting an erroneous impression made by the original call from weakness. Some thought A would have overcalled a club with a diamond, and B would then have gone no trumps. In that case it would have cost Z five by cards, game and rubber, with 30 aces, a loss of 340 points.

Now let us look at the same hand under the new count, in which the object of the bidding is no longer to concentrate all the energies on leading up to a no-trumper, but to any sound declaration in any suit, as they all have a chance to go game.

Under the new system Z, although without a trick in his hand, has no fear of misleading his partner by calling a spade, as that is the accepted defensive call on the forced bid. The dealer may find it wise to declare two clubs on the second round, but he must not show the suit on the original declaration, as he has no sure tricks at the head of it.

No matter what A does, Y will turn the spade into a royal, because with four fighting suits the third hand is no longer in the helpless condition that faced him under the old count. At royals Y will make two by cards unless B overcalls him with a no-trumper.

The point is that no matter what A and B may do the dealer's defensive spade saves him from any serious loss in the way of penalties, whereas under the old count he laid himself open to loss in two ways, by overbidding his hand or by misleading his partner.

Under the old system of defensive bids by the dealer there were some hands upon which he bid no trumps that came very near being genuine, and owing to the small declaring value of the black suits the partner had to take chances on the no-trumper going through if he had a black hand. Here is a case that came up about two years ago:

♥ K J 5 4		
♣ A J 9 8 4 2		
♦ K 6 3		
♠ .....		
♥ 9 8	Y	♥ A 10 3
♣ Q 7 5	A B	♣ 6
♦ A 10 5 4		♦ 9 8 7
♠ K 8 4 2	Z	♠ A J 10 9 7 5
♥ Q 7 6 2		
♣ K 10 3		
♦ Q J 2		
♠ Q 6 3		

Although Z has three queens and a king jack ten he has not a sure trick in his hand, therefore he is forced under the old defensive system to call no trumps. A has nothing to say, and Y is certainly not going to undertake a contract to win three by cards in clubs in the face of his partner's warning that there is not a sure trick in any suit in Z's hand. B could do nothing but pass in his turn.

A led his fourth best spade and B came back with the jack and ten, catching the queen and making the fifth and sixth tricks in the suit himself. In the meantime dummy is whittled down to two diamonds, two hearts and three clubs, A having discarded two hearts.

B boldly led the diamond right up to dummy's king. Z played the jack second hand and A ducked it, so as to get the suit solid for the next rounds. Y led the club, won with the king and came back with the ten, but was afraid to finesse it for fear of letting in all the diamonds, so that all Y and Z made on the hand was

three tricks, king of diamonds and two clubs, the contract failing for four tricks, although the Y and Z hands do not look to be so weak.

Play this hand under the new count and the dealer's defence in his opening call is not no trumps but one spade. When A passes Y bids a club and B declares a royal. With his stopper in spades and support in other suits Z would go to his partner's assistance with two clubs, but A would not be justified in bidding two royals, although some beginners would do so.

The student should make a careful note of this point, because many persons would make the mistake of calling two royals with A's cards. The average expectation of the one who makes the original declaration for the partnership, his partner having said nothing so far, that is, is to find two tricks to support him. If the partner has nothing more than these two tricks, he has no right to bid on them because they are already included in the bid that has been made.

If A should bid two royals he would be practically saying to his partner, "I have more than the two tricks that you naturally expect me to have to support your declaration, therefore I increase your call one more trick," which is not true and might lead B out of his depth.

B might go on to two royals himself, on the strength of his ability to ruff the suit declared against him, but Y would do the same thing on the same grounds, going three clubs. With so many losing cards in his hand B would probably stop bidding and lead the ace of spades.

Y would trump his trick, and seeing that he had two good suits, either of which could be cleared at the expense of one trick, he would at once go to trumps, playing the king from dummy and finessing the ten on the return, so as to make B lead a red suit if he got in.

When the trump ten holds, Y would pick up A's queen and establish his own heart suit, after which the only trick left for A and B would be the ace of diamonds; five by cards, game and rubber, for Y and Z, which is a very different result from being set for four tricks on a defensive call of no trumps.

The difference in the two systems of original declarations by the dealer brought about by the new count lies entirely in the defence. When he is strong enough to attack he bids in much the same way under either system. The only exception is that he is not so apt to bid a spade and wait when he has a strong hand but is undecided between two calls, because under the present system he might be left with it, his partner being no longer under any obligation to pull him out. On the contrary the third hand is rather inclined to let all spade calls alone unless he is pretty strong himself.

Under the old system the dealer was forced to choose between two evils—to deceive his partner by making a call that gave a false impression of his holding or to undertake a contract that he had no hope of fulfilling unless he was simply anticipating his partner's bid and trusting to the kindness of his adversaries to take it off his hands.

Under the new system the dealer does not care whether the adversaries take him out or not. His decla-

rations on strength are not likely to be hurt very much unless his adversaries prefer penalties to winning games and his calls on weak hands are protected by the limit of 100 in penalties, which any player is willing to pay rather than see the other side go game on the hand.

## XI

### INFERENCES FROM THE BIDDING

In the old whist days the famous American Club team of Boston used to practise inferences from the fall of the cards by stopping at the eighth trick and requiring every member of the team to write down his individual opinion of the cards held by each of the three other players. The cracks worked up to the 90 per cent. class at this kind of work.

Probably nothing else would improve a player's game so fast as a little of this sort of thing at royal auction, but instead of waiting until the eighth trick for the inferences the players should take a recess at the end of the bidding, and each of them should write down what he thought the others had in their hands to justify the call made.

It was found in the Boston practice that any serious errors in inference were usually due to errors in the play upon which the inference was based, such as not covering second hand when a player should have done so with the combination he held. On the same principle it should be obvious that errors made in inferences from the bidding at royals would quickly disclose the mistakes in the bids on which the inferences were based and should prove a corrective.

If the bid is justified by the cards held, especially bids on high cards in suit, and these bids are based on certain conventions which every good player is

familiar with, it should be obvious that any player making a bid on those lines might as well lay the cards on the table face up, as both his partner and his adversaries should be able to read him for those cards in his hand.

But one of the greatest errors that a player can fall into is making too rigid inferences until he is sure of the character of the players with whom he is engaged. The writer will never forget a hand he played when the new count first came out, in which he bid two no trumps on inferences. Here are the cards he held, sitting on the dealer's right:

♥ 9 7 2  
♦ Q J 8 6 4  
♦ 3  
♠ K 8 7 3

These are B's cards, on Z's deal, with A for B's partner and Y for the dealer's partner.

Z started with one diamond, upon which B inferred that he held at least one sure trick in the suit, perhaps two. A doubled, showing he could stop the diamond suit twice, so he probably held king and queen and Z had nothing but the ace. Y pulled his partner out of the double with two clubs.

It is now up to B to declare himself. From Y's bid he infers that Y cannot support Z's diamonds and is afraid to leave him with that contract for fear of a heavy loss. If A has two tricks in diamonds B has two in clubs as trumps, so Y cannot go game on that

contract, therefore B passes, but Z goes back to two diamonds, and A, instead of doubling again, calls two in hearts, which Y passes, and once more it is up to B.

B's inferences from the bidding as it now stands are unchanged as to A's two stoppers in diamonds, as he doubled that suit originally, but Z must be very long in it and Y has no support in diamonds, having nothing but clubs. Z on the other hand cannot support his partner's club call, so he goes back to the diamonds.

Now if Y had anything in spades or hearts he would have supported his partner's original diamond instead of shifting, or at least would have overcalled A's two hearts on the second round. As Y passes the top spade should be in A's hand and B counts up A's trick winners as two in diamonds, one spade and at least two in hearts. Add these five to B's spade king and two clubs and there are eight sure tricks in sight at no trumps; game if A has an extra spade trick, so B declared two at no trumps.

Rather to his astonishment Y doubled, after which every one passed.

How did he come out?

Well, B made a trick with the ace of diamonds and could have made the king of spades. The adversaries chalked up 700 points in penalties. They are talking about the hand yet at that club. Here is the actual distribution of the cards:

♥ K 5		
♣ A K 10 8		
♦ K 9 5		
♠ A J 6 4		
♥ J 10 8 6 4	Y	♥ 9 7 2
♣ 9 7 5 2	A	♣ Q J 8 6 4
♦ A Q 7	B	♦ 3
♠ 2	Z	♠ K 8 7 5
♥ A Q 3		
♣ .....		
♦ J 10 8 6 4 2		
♠ Q 10 9 3		

Of course Z had no business to bid a diamond without a trick in the suit, but he was an old bridge player and had the habit. A's two stoppers were really only one, as a queen may be led through and killed. Y's excuse for the club bid was that he wanted to show his partner where he could win some tricks on the side, and it had the desired effect of coaxing Z back to the diamond call. A explained his ridiculous bid of two hearts, by saying he thought it would push Z up to three diamonds, which he did not think Z could make.

On the play Z led the top diamond and dummy put on the ace second hand, which is always the best chance to make two tricks in the suit when a jack is led through. Dummy then led a club and the king held second hand, Z discarding a small spade. This discard discouraged Y from coming through with a spade, as he had intended doing, so he led the king of hearts, which was certainly a stroke of genius.

The next heart Z won with the queen and came

along with another diamond, but dummy refused to put on the queen, hoping Y would block the suit, which he did. As Y had no more hearts he was obliged to try the spade, and led the jack. B passed it up, believing Z would do the same, of course, as dummy had nothing but the deuce, but Z jumped on it with the queen and made three diamonds, and the three aces made the last three tricks.

A small slam against a contract to make two by cards at no trumps, the declaration being based on inferences from the bidding! Moral: You have got to know who is doing the bidding.

Some of the most difficult inferences are probably those based on doubling, because it is sometimes hard to tell what the doubler's object may be. Here is a hand in which every suit but the spade was doubled by some one or other:

♥ J 10 7 6	
♦ A K 6	
◆ 7	
♣ 10 7 6 5 4	
♥ ..... .	
♣ J 9 8 7 4 2	Y
♦ A J 6 3 2	A B
♠ J 3	Z
♥ K Q 2	♥ A 9 8 5 4 3
♦ Q 3	♣ 10 5
◆ Q 10 8 5 4	♦ K 9
♣ K 9 8	♠ A Q 2

Z dealt and started with one no trump, his explanation after the hand being that he figured king and queen as good as the ace in hearts and his cards were

therefore queen above average, with fair protection in three suits. This is a little sketchy for a no-trumper, but many players believe in such declarations on a dealer's forced bid.

A bid two clubs, new count, which Y doubled, to show two stoppers and encourage his partner to go ahead with the no-trumper. B went two hearts, partly to pull his partner out in case Z should not go no trumps again and partly because it was a good bid on his cards. He inferred strength in everything but clubs with Z and although he might lose his king of diamonds and two clubs, he ought to get in twice on the spades and make some hearts, now that A knows what to lead, if Z goes on with the no-trumper.

Z did not go back to the no-trumper but doubled the two hearts instead, whereupon A bid three diamonds and it went around to Z, who doubled that. When A and Y both passed it was B's last say. What could he infer from the bids up to that point?

His inferences were that Y had two tricks in clubs, but that A had a long suit of it. A could not have anything in hearts or he would have supported the heart bid, therefore the hearts lie badly for B. A further inference was that A's diamonds must be stronger in trick winning cards than the clubs or he would have called that suit first. Z's last double is on general principles that A cannot make three by cards in diamonds against the situation disclosed by the bids, which is quite right.

The result of B's inferences was that he would probably lose less at no trumps than in hearts, if he made

it, or than his partner would in diamonds if he were left with it, so he bid three no trumps, which was necessary under the new count at ten a trick. Rather to Y's astonishment Z did not double. On the play B made two by cards.

Z opened with the fourth best diamond and the only tricks they got were the king and queen of clubs, two hearts, B passing the suit twice, and the spade king.

Another difficult matter in inference is to divine partner's motive in making bids which are promptly abandoned on the next round, especially when it looks as if he should have made the second bid first. The beginner should never forget that good players have objects in view when they depart from the beaten track, and it will always pay to stop and figure them out. Here is a case involving this sort of inference which will probably illustrate the point better than any description:

♥ 8 4 3		
♣ J 3		
♦ Q 9 7 6 3 2		
♠ A K		
♥ A Q 10 7 6 2	Y	♥ J 9 5
♣ K Q 10 8 7 6	A B	♣ A 9 5
♦ ... .....		♦ A
♠ 10	Z	♠ 9 8 6 5 4 2
♥ K		
♣ 4 2		
♦ K J 10 8 5 4		
♠ Q J 7 3		

Z dealt and bid a diamond. A bid two clubs and Y promptly went two diamonds. Some persons might

be tempted to call a royal on B's cards, but he felt compelled to pass, as he had no more than the conventional two tricks in his hand, on which he is not justified in increasing his partner's bid. When it got round to A he bid two hearts, which Y passed.

It is now B's turn to think. He did not ask himself what was the object of the shift, but what was the object of overcalling one diamond with two clubs, when it would have been easier to do so with one heart. B's inference was that his partner's object was to make it easier for him to show two suits, and that A did not really want either of them for the trump, but was hoping B would go no trumps if he could only stop the diamonds.

The beginner should observe that if A calls the heart first and either Y or Z go two diamonds A would have to bid three clubs to show his second suit, and both Y and Z might easily refuse to overcall that, as A's own cards show they are not likely to make three in diamonds, much less bid it, and A would be foolish to risk a three trick contract in clubs on the chance that his partner was able to take him out of it with a no-trumper, because if B cannot take him out the clubs will never go game.

B having figured the thing out right that the two club bid was to make it easy for Y and Z to overcall for only two tricks in diamonds, went two no trumps, and Z at once went on to three diamonds. A, now sure of his ground, called three no trumps and when Y went five diamonds A went four no trumps and B made a grand slam on the hand, the ace of diamonds winning

the first trick and six hearts and six clubs coming along after it.

Here is an example of inference of a different kind:

♥ 10 9 2			
♣ Q J 5 3			
♦ 9 8			
♠ 10 9 7 2			
♥ A K J	Y	♥ Q 8 7 5 4 3	
♣ A 10 9 7 2	A B	♣ 6 4	
♦ J 6 4	Z	♦ 7 5	
♠ Q 6		♠ J 8 3	
♥ 6			
♣ K 8			
♦ A K Q 9 3 2			
♠ A K 5 4			

Z dealt and called a diamond, as he did not care to risk the no-trumper with two unprotected suits. A declared two in clubs, which Y passed. As B had no winners at the head of his heart suit and seven losing cards in his hand he let the two clubs stand. Z shifted to two no trumps.

A's inference was that Z had a solid diamond suit and a stopper in clubs. He could have nothing in hearts, as A had that suit himself. To justify Z's going no trumps he must have some winning spades, but his weakness in clubs and hearts forbid his going no trumps originally.

What Z is figuring on then in order to make his no-trumper is a club lead. Having satisfied himself that he had Z's hand down about right, A passed. So did Y and B.

Now, if A's inferences are correct, the only way to make Z a present of the game is to lead a club, so A carefully avoids that suit and leads up to Z's inferred weakness in hearts, beginning with the king and following up with the ace. The third heart B overtook with the queen and ran down the rest of the suit, but Z was clever enough to keep two of each of his strong suits so as to prevent a spade being established against him by one lead.

A's inferences enable him to set the contract for 50 points. If he leads a club Z goes game in a walk, yet many players would lead that suit, so as to get it cleared up, having such re-entry cards in hearts.

## XII

### IMPORTANCE OF THE CLUB SUIT

In the old game of auction bridge the club suit played a very unimportant part. It was cut out from both ends of the game. It was too expensive for safety bidding and too cheap to go game, being outside the pale of protection in the first case and outside the possibility of reaching thirty points in the second. Many of the best players would not mention clubs in their bids unless they held a solid suit of it, while others called it only as dealer, and then only with the top honors.

In the analysis of the opening bids made by a dealer in 500 hands it was found that he called a club only twenty-six times, or about once in twenty deals, the conventional strength on which such bids were based being at least five in suit, headed by two tricks, such as ace and king, or with three honors of any kind, regardless of length in suit, but with possible trick outside. The whole idea of the club suit call by the dealer was to encourage the partner to go no trump, but it was always understood that the invitation should be strong enough to stand if the player was left with it.

The third hand never supported his partner in clubs unless the score was advanced enough to put them game. If the second hand overcalled the club, which good players seldom did, third hand would pass, unless he had a safe declaration of his own. He would never

bid two clubs, because if the intervening bid was strong enough to go game it would overcall him and he was wasting his breath on the club call. If the intervening bid could not go game it could probably defeat a two trick contract in clubs.

Just as the old bridge players used to shrink from what they called the fatal diamond, so the auction players seemed to shirk the hybrid club. But now, playing royals, five clubs to the ace and king is as good as a diamond with the same strength, and the partner will support such a bid just as quickly as he would have supported a red suit in the old game. The clubs stand where the diamonds used to be, at six a trick, and in their place they are just as good as diamonds, as it takes five by cards in either suit to go game.

This change in the position and importance of the club suit on the fighting line brings about some remarkable differences in the bidding. Take this case:

♥ A 7 6		
♦ K 10 8 6 2		
◆ 7 2		
♠ K 6 2		
♥ K J 10 8 5 2	Y	♥ 9
♦ 5	A	♦ 7 3
◆ K 3	B	♦ Q J 8 6 4
♠ A J 10 8	Z	♠ Q 9 5 4 3
♥ Q 4 3		
♦ A Q J 9 4		
◆ A 10 9 5		
♠ 7		

This hand was played some years ago and was noted at the time from the fact that a bold no trump bid on the part of either Y or Z would have won the rubber, but as they were a game in and cautious Z called a club and A said a heart, which they all passed. A just made the odd by careful play, although he should have lost it, had Y and Z played better.

Had Z called no trump and A gone hearts Y would have doubled and Z would have gone two no trumps, and if A had persisted with his hearts in spite of the double he would have been doubled again and set for 200 if not for 300. If Z is left with his contract he makes three by cards at no trump.

Now look at the bidding on this hand under the new count, clubs worth six a trick: Z would still call that suit originally, as it is a much safer bid than no trumps. When A overcalls with a heart Y would support his partner's clubs. Now if A goes two hearts Y would double to show the suit stopped and Z could either let the double stand, return to the clubs or go no trumps.

If Z went no trumps the double and the no-trumper would effectually shut off A from going further and B would hardly be rash enough to bid three royals against it. Z would go game at no trumps, being led up to that bid by his partner's knowing it was worth while to support the club call in the first place, which it was not at 4 a trick.

Even if Z did not care to risk the no-trumper for fear of the spades and stuck to his clubs, bidding three tricks, he would go game by winning the first heart trick with the queen and getting a heart discard later

on the spade king after drawing B's trumps. This would establish a cross ruff, and the only tricks for A and B would be the ace of spades and the king of diamonds.

The value of the club suit as a game winning possibility sometimes leads to some interesting bidding. Here is a hand upon which there was a great difference of opinion as to the correct bids, that question being more interesting than the play, which was marred by a bad opening:

♥ J 2		
♣ 6		
♦ Q 9 8 7 4 2		
♠ A Q 7 2		
♥ A K 7 5 4 3	Y	♥ 10 9 8
♣ 10 9 2	A B	♣ J 4 3
♦ 5 3	Z	♦ A K
♠ 8 3		♠ K J 10 5 4
♥ Q 6		
♣ A K Q 8 7 5		
♦ J 10 6		
♠ 9 6		

Z dealt and called a club, A bidding a heart. Y shifted to two in diamonds to show his partner that he could not support the clubs. B, instead of bidding two hearts, thought it better to show his partner what suit he was assisting with, so he doubled the two diamonds, leaving it to A to go back to two hearts if he saw fit.

Z passed the double, hoping it would stand, but being afraid to redouble for fear of forcing A back to

hearts. But A went back to the hearts himself, figuring his hand as good for two by cards if B could stop the diamonds twice, and Y having said his say passed.

When it got around to Z he figured the heart contract might easily go game, but that all he could lose on Y's diamond contract would be B's two stoppers in trumps and two tricks in hearts, as Y must have at least two tricks probable in spades to justify him in calling a suit in which four honors were against him, two in B's hand and two in Z's. So Z bid three diamonds, and B could not go three no trumps with the whole club suit declared against him.

B opened the hand badly, leading his own spade suit instead of his partner's hearts, his excuse being that he had the re-entries for his suit certain in trumps. The consequence was that Y got three rounds of clubs and discarded both his losing hearts. After Y had ruffed a heart he led ace and another spade, Z's ten of trumps shutting out A. Another heart and another ruff and Y was all trumps, so that the only tricks A and B made were the two top trumps.

Here is a case that recently came under the writer's notice in which the dealer was able to snatch the declaration from his partner just in time to save him from disaster, thanks to the counting value of the club suit as it now stands:

♥ K 5 2			
♦ J 9			
♦ K Q 7			
♦ K J 6 5 4			
♥ Q J 8 7			
♣ 8 6			
♦ A 9 6 5 4 2			
♦ Q			
	Y	A B	Z
	♥ A 10 6 5 4 3	♣ 5 4	♦ J 10
		♦ 10 9 2	
	♥ .....		
	♣ A K Q 10 7 3 2		
	♦ 8 3		
	♦ A 8 7 3		

Z dealt and started with a club. A called a diamond and Y promptly went no trumps. B shifted to two hearts, and Z, although he knew his partner must have the diamond suit safe, was not so sure about the hearts and thought it just as well to show his great strength in clubs by overcalling B.

Y did not understand the warning, or did not heed it, and took his partner's call as a hint for him to go ahead with his no-trumper if he had the hearts stopped as well as the diamonds, so he called two no trumps. This B passed, but Z, still uncertain, overcalled with four clubs, and the play proved that his judgment was correct, although there was a good deal of discussion as to Y's bidding, depending on the position of the lead and the suit led of course.

Had Y been left with his no-trumper it would have been B's lead and he would have led the jack of his partner's suit, diamonds, which would enable A to mark both king and queen with Y. With a solid club

suit laid on the table, the ace of spades with it and the two best diamonds against him, A would easily have seen that his only hope was the hearts, and Y's no-trumper would have been set for two tricks.

On the club declaration, A having the lead, he made his ace of diamonds and then tried the heart through dummy's king, but never made another trick, Z scoring a little slam, with nine honors, a gain of 110 points, to say nothing of the value of a game won, instead of the 100 points that would have been lost had Y been allowed to hold his no-trumper.

The club suit is also very useful upon occasion to show the partner an assisting suit in case he wishes to go on with his own bid or to push up an adversary. To do this under the old count was absurd, as a shrewd adversary would at once drop out and leave the contract in clubs to its fate, as it could never go game.

But as the count stands now clubs can go game, and when a player names that suit either as a pusher or as an assist it is dangerous to leave him with it, as he may be off with the game in his pocket before you know it. Here is a hand in which there was some lively bidding, starting with a club assist, but getting a trifle rash toward the end:

♥ Q 10 9 8	
♦ A K Q 5 4	
♦ J 3	
♦ 8 4	
♥ J 7 6	
♣ 8 6	
♦ 8	
♦ K Q J 10 9 6 2	
	Y A      B Z
	♥ A 4 3 2
	♣ 3 2
	♦ 7 5 4 2
	♦ A 5 3
♥ K 5	
♣ J 10 9 7	
♦ A K Q 10 9 6	
♦ 7	

Z dealt and called a diamond. A bid a royal and Y two clubs, simply as an assist. This has lately become a common trick with good players, who prefer to name a very strong suit, with which they can assist the partner, instead of simply increasing his bid, and leaving him in the dark until he comes to play the hand as to where the assistance lies.

The beginner should note the difference in this system between increasing a partner's bid when a player holds more than his share of tricks, but scattering. Give Y in this hand only the ace of clubs, but the ace of spades and his four good hearts, and his call is two diamonds; but when the assisting strength is all in one suit and he is willing to be left with the contract in case his partner does not care to go on the correct call is the suit.

B bid two royals, which was not justified by his cards, because he has only one trick in his hand outside the trumps and is not short enough in any suit

to get in a timely ruff, but some players have a very exaggerated idea of the value of two aces.

Z did not know whether his partner's bid meant that he was weak in diamonds or not, but he was very sure of his own strength in the club suit, so he dropped the diamonds and bid three clubs against the two royals. A, without stopping to count up his own six losing cards, simply jumped to the conclusion that B had assisted on two sure tricks, and went three royals.

This Y passed, but Z, afraid of losing the game and rubber, determined to take a chance and bid five clubs, abandoning his diamonds entirely, and on the play Y made a small slam.

It was B's lead and he started with the ace of spades. Had he dreamed of what was coming he would probably have made his ace of hearts at once, but instead of that he led the diamond, hoping to find his partner void. This allowed Y to pick up the trumps, force Z with a spade and take four discards of his losing hearts on Z's diamond suit.

As an invitation or forced bid by the dealer, when he does not particularly care about having clubs for trumps, the suit takes the same rank as the heart or the diamond and should be declared on the same principles, that is, with two top honors and at least four or five in suit or with enough tricks outside to make up for the strength that is lacking in the suit itself.

It seems to take the average player some time to get accustomed to looking upon five clubs to the king queen with an outside ace as just as desirable to bid on as if the clubs were a red suit in the old game of auc-

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tion, and there seems to be some hesitation still on the part of the partner who, if he is an old auction player, has been so long in the habit of regarding an original club call as showing a practically solid suit. In the old auction days a call of two clubs was usually taken as a command to the partner to make it no trumps if he had the ace of anything in his hand to get in with.

But now, under the new count, an original declaration of two clubs would mean just the opposite, as it would be made only on a long suit, not headed by the winning-cards, and would be almost a command to the partner to let it alone, just as the call of two hearts meant for the partner not to take it away with a no-trumper.

The principle is the same in both cases. The player with a long weak suit that is good for nothing unless it is the trump would much rather have his partner's aces and kings laid on the table to help him out than to be obliged to lay his string of trash on the table as an answer to his partner's call in some other suit or in no trumps.

In the days of straight bridge it was an axiom that if the dealer called a heart and his partner, the dummy, had a no-trumper it was a game hand, but if the dealer made it no trumps and the dummy had nothing but hearts it was a case of "you'll be sorry when you see me" on dummy's part.

This situation should never arise at auction, as each of the partners has a chance to correct the error into which the bridge player so often fell when he had to do it all himself.

## XIII

### BIDDING ON COMMONPLACE HANDS

The beginner frequently finds fault with the average text-book on auction bridge because it seems to confine its examples to hands out of the ordinary, just as the text-books on whist used to give nothing but deals in which there were big swings. "What are we to do with the ordinary hands?" asks the beginner. "Show us how to play the commonplace hands that one holds nine times out of ten and in which there are no coups."

As a rule such hands do not make any great or lasting impression, and many of them are what the whist players used to call "pianos," because there is nothing in them but the one bid and the one result if the hand is properly played. One player of the four gets the cards and the three others have nothing to do but to follow suit.

If the hand is properly played! But how often is a hand perfectly played? Probably not once in three times. In every rubber, no matter how ordinary the situations or how equal the distributions, there are points which none but the finished player would see. Tricks are lost which should have been won, games are thrown away that should have been saved, to say nothing of the errors in the bidding that has preceded the play.

In order to see just how many such hands there would be in the course of an ordinary rubber, hands

that were not worth talking about, four players at a club agreed to play a rubber and make notes of every hand just as it came along. The result was that they found that every hand had its points, in that rubber at least, a bad bid here and a trick lost there, with a risky double that lost the rubber thrown in.

It took just six deals to end the matter. Here they are:

♥ Q 8			
♦ J 10 9 8			
◆ A 9 7 4			
♠ Q J 2			
	Y		♥ K J 10 6 3
♥ A 4 2	A	B	♦ A 7 5
♦ Q 6			♦ Q 10 3
◆ 6 5 2			♠ 9 3
♠ K 10 7 5 4	Z		
♥ 9 7 5			
♦ K 4 3 2			
◆ K J 8			
♠ A 8 6			

Z dealt and started with a spade. A bid a royal, Y passed and B said no trumps, which all passed.

Z led a small club and B put on the queen second hand from dummy, which is recognized as the best chance to make two tricks in the suit when there is only one guard to the queen and the ace is fourth hand without the ten. Y played the Foster echo with his second best club, the ten, showing only one higher, which Z could easily read as the jack.

Dummy led the heart ace and followed with a small one, B running off five tricks in that suit. Z's discards

were a spade and a club, Y letting go the nine of diamonds as an echo, and the nine and jack of clubs. When B led the nine of spades to the king, Z put on the ace and led the eight of diamonds to his partner's signal. Y came back with the club, B putting on the ace and leading another spade, missing the game by one trick.

There was some discussion about the possibility of making four diamond tricks for Y and Z, but that was found to be impracticable. It is interesting to note that if B had left his partner in with the royal he would have lost the odd trick, and that if B had bid hearts instead of no trumps he would have fallen just short of game in that contract, getting only three by cards.

♥ K J 6 4	
♣ J 8 2	
♦ Q 4 2	
♠ Q J 5	
♥ 10	♥ 9 8 7 5 2
♣ Q 6 5	♣ K 10 3
♦ A K 10 9 7 3	♦ 6
♠ K 10 7	♠ 9 8 6 3
	Y
	A B
	Z
♥ A Q 3	
♣ A 9 7 4	
♦ J 8 5	
♠ A 4 2	

With the score 20 to 0 in his favor Z dealt this hand and bid no trump. A overcalled with two diamonds and Y, who was not sure of stopping the diamonds, passed. B, who could not support his partner in dia-

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monds, bid two hearts, which Z passed, and A, who counted on his partner for some sure tricks in hearts, went on to three diamonds.

With the hearts declared on his right Z thought he was good for four tricks, and if his partner could take one, they could set the contract, so he doubled.

Y led the spade queen and it went to A's king. A got out three rounds of trumps, as dummy could not ruff anything, discarding two hearts from dummy. Y led two more spades, Z winning the third round and leading the ace of hearts, followed by the queen, which A ruffed. A then played a Deschapelles coup, leading the queen of clubs to make the king good for a re-entry for the spade, but Z ducked the queen. A led another club and finessed the ten, which Z had to win with the ace. A made the next tricks with his two trumps and the king of clubs, but lost his contract by one trick, doubled, 100 points against simple honors.

In this hand the disaster is due to B's uncalled for bid of two hearts, which forced his partner out of his depth. Granted that he cannot support the diamonds, his partner must have a no-trumper to support B's hearts, and that combination is already declared against him in Z's hand. Had B let his partner alone A would have made his contract, but it is doubtful if Z would have doubled. Had Z overcalled with two no trumps he would have been set for a trick.

♥ A J 9 6 5 4		
♦ A 4		
♦ A 9 4 2		
♦ 6		
♥ K Q 2		Y
♦ K 8 2		A
♦ J 10 7 5 3		B
♦ K 3		Z
	♥ 8 3	
	♣ 9 5 3	
	♦ K	
	♦ A Q 10 8 7 4 2	
♥ 10 7		
♦ Q J 10 7 6		
♦ Q 8 6		
♦ J 9 5		

Z dealt with the score 20 to 0 against him and bid a spade as he had not the top honors in clubs. A passed, refusing to pull an adversary out of a spade call. Y bid a heart, as safer than no trumps, although he had three aces. B bid one royal, which both Z and A passed.

The bidding between Y and B went on to two hearts, two royals and three hearts, at which point B stopped, as he held two losing hearts and three losing clubs at least and his trump suit was far from solid, but A took it up and bid three royals on the strength of his heart stoppers. But for the strength in hearts on his left A might have doubled three hearts instead.

Z led the club queen and followed with the jack, dummy passing both rounds. Y led the ace and another heart, hoping to find his partner short. This let dummy lead the trumps and bring down all of Z's. By putting dummy in with a club A got a discard of the diamond on the king of hearts, making four by cards, four honors and the game.

On the heart contract Y should have stopped at two tricks when his partner started with a spade bid and did not support him. He would have been set had he tried to get three.

♥ Q J 9 6 4		
♣ A J		
♦ 8 7 4		
♠ Q 9 2		
♥ 10 2	Y	♥ A 5
♣ K 10 9 6 2	A	♣ Q 8 7 4 3
♦ Q J 6	B	♦ A K 10
♠ A 8 6	Z	♠ K 7 3
♥ K 8 7 3		
♣ 5		
♦ 9 5 3 2		
♠ J 10 5 4		

Z dealt with a game in, the score love all and 100 points in penalties on his side. He bid a spade. A passed, refusing to pull Z out. Y did not care to lose his advantage in the score and let the spade stand, which prompted B to go no trumps, and every one passed, Y still refusing to risk the other side's getting back that 100 points in penalties, which they might do if he bid two hearts. In this he was wise, as he would have failed to make the odd trick in hearts.

Z opened with the fourth best heart, which was rather fortunate, for had he avoided that suit on account of its being headed by a single honor and led the spade B would have got his clubs cleared before Y and Z got anything in shape.

B held off one round and Y returned the smallest

heart, as he saw he might have more than his partner if B had one left. B led a small club when he got in and Y took the trick and made three hearts. In the discards A kept all four of his clubs, two spades and a diamond, B holding two of each of the black suits and three diamonds. Although he made all the tricks after the hearts were gone he stopped just one short of game with 30 aces.

No one had any remarks to make about this hand.

♥ Q 10 4 2			
♣ .....			
♦ Q J 7 4 3			
♠ A 10 9 7			
♥ A J 9 8 6 5	Y	♥ 7	
♣ 3	A	♣ A K Q 10 9 5 4 2	
♦ A 9 6 2	B	♦ 5	
♠ 6 4	Z	♠ Q 8 3	
♥ K 3			
♣ J 8 7 6			
♦ K 10 8			
♠ K J 5 2			

Z dealt with the score 20 to 0 in his favor, but a game against him, and bid a spade. A, with his eye still on the 100 penalties and a game ahead, refused to take him out, but Y bid a diamond and B at once said two clubs.

When Z passed A overcalled with two hearts, as he could not support the clubs, and Y, who saw no chance to set the heart contract with a club suit to support it, and afraid of losing the rubber, bid three diamonds, which B promptly overcalled with four clubs.

About this time Z woke up. He saw that his partner was afraid of both the clubs and the hearts; therefore, he argued, Y's hand must be all diamonds and spades, and the spades ought to be pretty good to support a bid of three in diamonds. With the idea of giving Y the hint that he could support the spades, Z bid three royals, which seemed to take A quite by surprise. After some consideration he passed, and so did B.

A led his partner's suit instead of his own, and dummy ruffed the first trick. When B dropped the deuce Z read the trey as a singleton and at once led three rounds of trumps, finessing the ten on the second round. Now, if he has read A's hand right, A is all diamonds and hearts and B cannot hold more than two red cards, so Z leads a small diamond.

A held off, hoping for tenace with his ace and nine eventually, but the jack won and the small one returned brought the king and then the ten from Z, B discarding clubs, marking him with one heart only. A underplayed the heart, hoping to kill Y's re-entry for the diamonds, but Z won the trick with the king and led the suit right back, making five by cards, four honors and the game.

B would have lost two tricks had he undertaken to win five tricks in clubs. Even at four he was over-bidding his hand. Y could have made four by cards in diamonds if he had had the courage to draw all the trumps after being forced on the first trick and had taken the finesse in spades.

♥ K 9 2	
♦ Q 9	
♦ Q 7	
♠ A J 10 6 5 3	
♥ Q 5 4	Y
♦ J 8 5	A B
♦ A 10 9 4 3	Z
♦ 4 2	
♥ A 8 6 3	♥ J 10 7
♦ A 7 6 3 2	♦ K 10 4
♦ 5 2	♦ K J 8 6
♦ 9 8	♦ K Q 7

Z dealt, game all, and bid a club, having a trick outside to make up for the trick he was short in the club suit itself. A called a diamond, which his cards do not justify, as he has only one trick in his hand. Y bid a royal and B called two diamonds, as he had more than the average of two tricks to support his partner.

Z, on the other hand, with just two tricks, declined to support Y's bid, but Y himself took a chance on two royalties, and B, counting on his partner for two tricks, which he should have had to justify his diamond bid, doubled the two royalties.

This is a rash double, although B sits on the right side of the strong hand. The proper point of view would be that Y would have to make four by cards to win the rubber, but if he is doubled, his contract wins it. Instead of that B was too anxious to get back those 100 points in penalties on the second hand.

On the play Y had a narrow escape. B led the jack

of hearts. Dummy put the ace right on and led the trump for an ace jack ten finesse, which went to B, who false-carded the king and led another heart. Y won this trick with the king and then led ace and another trump instead of trying to put dummy in for another finesse, and it was fortunate that he did.

B won the last round with the queen, but was afraid to lead another heart while dummy had the ace of clubs to get in with, as it would establish the eight of hearts for a trick in Z's hand, so he led a small diamond, hoping that A would come up to the club with a supporting queen or jack.

A did not see through the scheme, but read B out of hearts and holding five diamonds to the king queen jack, which he had underplayed because A had bid a diamond at the start. So A went back with the ten of diamonds, and B was in the lead again. Had A led the club he would have set Y's two royals for 100 points and saved the game and rubber, and B would have prided himself on a clever double.

As it was B went on with the diamonds and Y got in a ruff, led a third round of hearts, establishing dummy's eight, and when A won the trick with the queen of hearts and led the club it was too late. Y put on the queen, B the king and Z the ace and Y discarded his remaining club on the heart trick, trumping the next two.

When the line was drawn under the two tricks at double value and 68 in honors and the 250 added for the rubber it was found that Y's side was just 401 points ahead on the balance.

"If you had only come through with a club." remarked B, "we should have had a total of 239 points to their 210 and still as good a chance as they for the rubber."

All of which is perfectly true, yet they say there is nothing in the play of the cards; it is all in the bid.

## XIV

### SPECULATIVE BIDS

Any person taking up the new count at royal auction should be especially careful not to overcall another player on a purely speculative hand, as that error is more expensive in royals than it ever was in auction. The fact that the suits are cheaper and can be shown for smaller bids, added to the fact that any of them can go game, leads many a beginner into making declarations under the new count that he would never have dreamed of under the old.

This refers of course to the free bids, and not to the forced declarations of the dealer. In auction everything was headed for the no-trumper, simply because half the pack was good for nothing else. In royals, every suit has a chance to go game from zero and there is consequently much less speculative bidding. The player who persists in taking chances on finding his partner with a phenomenal hand will find it a losing game.

The dealer is forced to bid something, and his bids are guided by the doctrine of probabilities as applied to two possible situations: Those in which the odds are in favor of the success of the contract he assumes, and those in which the chances are that his losses will be small, even if inevitable.

He never expects to do it all himself, but at the same time he should not reckon on unreasonable help from

his partner. He bases his hopes for assistance to success and his hope of escape from serious loss on precisely the same thing; two probable tricks in the partner's hand.

Experience has shown that these two tricks are the average of the assistance to be looked for in any hand which has not declared itself and which has not been declared against, the latter being an important element. When the dealer has a fairly strong hand, he bases his hopes for success on finding this average of two tricks in the dummy. He is not playing to save himself but to win points and would make the declaration in any position at the table. Upon some occasions with a perfectly justifiable call he will be badly set back, but in the long run the law of averages will bring him out ahead if his bids are sound.

But if the dealer has a hand with only two tricks in it, such as four to the ace king in some suit and nothing better than a jack outside, the two probable tricks in his partner's hand hold out no hope of getting the seven that he is forced to bid on the combined hands. The chances are all against him, and in any other position he would instantly pass; but as dealer he must declare something, so he shows the suit in which he has the fewest losing cards, that is, the sure tricks, no matter what the final declaration may be.

If the adversaries' hands are strong enough to hold out any hope of their going game, they will overcall him. If they are not so strong, they are foolish to take the dealer out of a losing speculation, as the chances are better for penalties on every hand on which they

know he cannot go game and their own going game is problematical. When neither side can go game on any declaration, it is the side that is playing for fifty a trick that has the advantage. Until players learn that simple lesson they will never succeed at royals.

Now consider the manner in which these adversaries of the dealer estimate their chances when they make a free bid. The second player has just as much right to look forward to finding two tricks in his partner's hand as the dealer had to look for them in the hand of his partner when he made his forced bid.

If the second hand has the cards that hold out a reasonable prospect of winning five tricks he should avail himself of the free bid and declare at once, regardless of the dealer's bid, as he cannot lose very heavily and his partner may have the cards to put them game on the combined hands. Five tricks in one hand and two probable in the other is a pretty strong combination.

But if the second player has not more than two or three tricks in his hand he is throwing away his own money and robbing his partner at the same time if he makes a free bid on such cards, because he is voluntarily assuming a contract which has all the odds against it. He would be quite justified in declaring upon such cards if he were the dealer, because a bid of some kind is forced from him, but the bids of the second hand are free and should always be carefully considered.

Simple as this proposition would appear, average players seem blind to its importance, and the only ex-

planation of the fact that they do not lose every time they play is that the bidding of their opponents, when opposed to the dealer, is equally bad and the two partnerships are often found engaged in a game resembling giveaway at checkers, in which each side vies with the other in generosity.

Much of the fault lies in the attractiveness of the new count. On first acquaintance it seems to offer so many opportunities for bidding that one is apt to over-indulge in the luxury of declaring and to bid on hands simply because the new count makes it cheaper than it was at the old game. These players forget that the risk of being left with the declaration is still there and that they cannot make a bid at any price without assuming a contract.

Take this case:

♥ 10 8 4 2			
♦ J 10 8 5			
◆ K 8 5 2			
♠ 6			
♥ K 7	Y	♥ J 6 5 3	
♦ K Q 9 3 2	A B	◆ 6 4	
◆ J	Z	♦ A 6 4 3	
♠ A Q 8 3 2		♦ J 7 5	
♥ A Q 9			
♦ A 7			
◆ Q 10 9 7			
♠ K 10 9 4			

Regardless of the old or new count Z's hand is a no-trumper, but the cards held by the second player, A,

are fairly illustrative of the kind of hands that lead the beginner into temptation.

Under the old count any player would pass at once for two reasons. In the first place it would be absurd to bid three clubs against a no-trumper and six in spades is out of the question. In the second place, there is no use in making such a bid, even if it would not only secure the contract, but would carry it through successfully, because under the old count a black suit cannot go game even if the declarer makes a grand slam. If B has the cards to make nine tricks in clubs there is not much to fear from Z's no-trumper.

But under the new count instead of two reasons for refraining from the bid there are two temptations to make it. First, it is cheaper, two tricks in clubs or in royals being enough to overcall the no trump. Second, it is possible to go game with either suit. Given such a hand as A's many persons would overcall the dealer with two clubs as a starter, or if they were ambitious they might say two royals, although it is always advisable to begin with the cheaper suit when you have two.

Let us look at A's cards for a minute and see what foundation there is for such a bid as two clubs or two royals. He has in his hand two sure tricks and three or four probable. The average expectation from his partner is two, making a total of four sure, five or six probable, yet he cheerfully undertakes to win eight.

As the preponderance of strength is declared with Z, prudence would suggest that B's average be discounted a little. If Z's hand is so much above average that

he can declare no trumps without the ace, the two kings, and two queens that are in A's hand, it is highly improbable that B has his usual average of two sure tricks. Taking this into account, A would be lucky to win five tricks out of his contract to make eight, if he should offer so ill considered a bid as two clubs, or two royals.

If we examine the result of either declaration we shall have no difficulty in arriving at the consequences if Y and Z are good players and not addicted to the same reckless generosity in the bidding. On the club declaration Y would double to show his partner that he could stop that suit in a no-trumper. If A shifted to royals Z would double that.

In neither case would Z go back to his no-trumper, which was only a forced bid. He knows that the clubs would probably be cleared in two rounds for A and the spades lie over him. The game to play for now is penalties, as Z can see that if Y can double clubs A and B must have everything else in the pack to get eight tricks against the Y and Z hands.

On the club contract A would have to play very well to make six tricks, losing 200 points and simple honors on his free bid. If he shifted to the royals he would have just as much trouble to get six tricks that way, losing the same amount in penalties but saving the honor score.

The play on the spade contract, which would be the winning declaration when A's clubs were doubled and he shifted, would be for Y to lead the trump, as he has every suit stopped himself, and his partner must be

full of winning cards that need protection from A's trumps. Dummy would cover with the jack and the ace would catch the king. Another round of trumps from A would leave two good in Z's hand.

Now if A starts the clubs Z wins the king with the ace and after picking up two of A's trumps would lead a small diamond to his partner's discards, upon which the jack, king and ace would fall, leaving B in. The best play for A would be to try to make his king of hearts by leading the suit from dummy, and after that all A could make would be a trump and a club.

There is nothing unusual about the hands that do not enter the bidding. They lie just as probability says they should. Z's preponderance of strength marks B as holding probably only one trick instead of the usual two, which is just what he has. A makes the maximum of possibilities on his cards, five tricks, owing to the strong hand being on his right, so that he saves his king of hearts and makes his spade tenace.

Against the declared no-trumper it should have been clear to A that it was practically impossible for him to go game in either of the black suits, even if B had an exceptional hand. Against the theory of averages, giving B two tricks at the most, more probably only one, A's declaration to win eight tricks is simple recklessness, justly punished by the loss of 200 points in penalties.

As has been remarked, the dealer's first bid is forced, but any subsequent bid he makes is free, and any ill considered calls on the second round are costly experiments. After he has been taken out of his forced bid

by an adversary he practically exchanges places with that adversary, the free bid falling to him under precisely the same conditions that it fell to his opponent when he was forced to make a bid at the start.

With the freed bid at his disposal, it becomes the dealer's duty to count up the possibilities of his cards just as if he were the second player, basing his calculations on the assumption that his partner has not more than two tricks, unless that partner has declared himself. Even these two should be discounted a trifle if the adversary's declaration seems to show that the strength is not equally distributed.

As an illustration of ill considered bidding on the part of a dealer on the second round, take this hand:

♥ J 9 7 3			
♣ 10 8 6 2			
♦ K 8 4			
♠ K 8			
♥ K Q 6 2	Y		♥ 10 4
♣ 9 7 5	A B		♣ A J 3
♦ A 10 7 3	Z		♦ 9 5
♠ 4 2			♠ A J 10 7 6 3
♥ A 8 5			
♣ K Q 4			
♦ Q J 6 2			
♠ Q 9 5			

Z has a legitimate no-trumper for his opening bid, his hand being queen-jack above average. Under the old count no one would be able to overcall this with a suit, but the majority of players would double on B's

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cards so as to get a spade led, because unless both king and queen are with Z, B gets the suit in shape in one round and has re-entries.

The beginner should observe that A holds cards on which he would declare a heart if he were the dealer and a bid was forced from him, but no good player would think of making such a declaration with a free bid, especially after the dealer has declared no trumps.

Under the new count to double a no-trumper will not secure a spade lead, as it is assumed that if the fourth hand is strong enough in spades to double he can afford to declare that suit for two tricks in royals. Under the old count it was taken for granted that a player should be willing to call three clubs over a no-trumper, if he were so anxious to have that suit led. But under the new count a double by the fourth hand calls for no particular suit to be led.

Two royals on B's hand is a good call, as he ought to make eight tricks if his partner has an average hand, and the bid is practically a forced one, as he must get a spade led if he wants to be sure that Z does not go game at no trump.

Here is an illustration of the usual situation reversed: B is the player who is forced to make a bid and Z is the player who has a free bid at his disposal. A hasty player would probably glance at his cards again and seeing the stopper in spades would declare two no trumps, which would be an injudicious bid under the circumstances, because the spade suit will be led and cleared at once, B having named that suit. How many tricks are there in Z's hand after that?

Three or four is a liberal estimate. Add the two from his partner and there is a total of six as a basis for an ill considered bid of eight.

Make a sensible allowance for the extra strength in B's hand to justify his bid of two royals and we should reduce Y's tricks to one probable, bringing the value of the Y and Z combination down to five tricks at the most, four being more likely as the limit. If this were the first round of bids, instead of the second and B dealt and called two royals would any good player overcall him with two no trumps if he held Z's hand?

Play the hand on B's declaration and he will just get through. Play it as a no-trumper on Z's declaration and he will just make it, as B does not get the spade lead at the start. But if Z rashly goes two no trumps after B has shown the spade suit A would double and Z would lose 400 points.

So far as the present understanding of the principles of the game goes it would seem that the guiding principle for free bids in royals should be this: Never count on your partner for more than two tricks unless he has declared himself to be stronger than usual. By adding these two to your own tricks and making due allowance for the doubtful ones you should arrive at a just estimate of the bidding value of your hand.

Another important point is this: If the other players cannot go game on their own declaration except by a miracle always let them alone unless you can go game yourself. Remember that it is about 100 to 1 that a suit call cannot go game with a legitimate no-trumper on its left, therefore it is about 100 to 1 that you cannot

go game if you have the suit against the no-trumper.

If you will remember these two simple propositions you will probably be astonished at the small number of hands on which you will be set for penalties when you get the contract on a free bid. Just watch that distinction next time you play and count up how many hands are penalized on free bids compared to those that fail on forced bids.

## XV

### TRYING FOR GAME

There is one point in the bidding at royal auction which would demand not only good judgment of your own hand but also careful consideration of the other bids and their possibilities. That is in overcalling a player who has overcalled you, whether he is your partner or your adversary.

Two important factors enter into the bidding under such circumstances. The first is the extent of the danger from the other bid, always calculated from the basis of the possibility of its going game. The second is the probability of your being able to go game yourself after you have discovered what is out against you. Neither of these things being probable, not to say possible, the player who lets matters stand and refuses to go further is the one who is playing for 50 points a trick, while his opponent is playing for anything from 6 to 10 points.

One of the factors in the bidding that require careful consideration when you are overcalled is the assisting bids from the partners, as well as the actual overcall itself. If your own partner refuses to assist you he has not more than two probable tricks, if he has so many. If the adversary's partner assists him your partner probably has nothing.

The next important factor is the shifts. If your partner shifts after you have been overcalled it should be a

sure sign that he can neither assist your original declaration nor stop the adversary's. If the adversary's partner shifts, on the contrary, it usually shows that your partner holds over the first declarer or has the suit which neither of them declares and in which you are weak.

Any person who will watch an ordinary rubber at royals will not have much trouble in picking out a number of examples of bad judgment in following up a declaration after it has been overcalled, and this bad judgment will usually be shown in trying to win a game that cannot be won, instead of trying to defeat a contract that could not go game. The most interesting cases are usually those in which the partner shifts. Take this hand:

♥ Q			
♣ K	Q	6	5
♦ K	Q	10	6
♠ 9	8	5	
♥ K	7	5	
♣ 10	9	4	3
♦ J	8	7	4
♠ 6	3		
		Y	
	A		B
	Z		
♥ J	10	9	8
♣ A	J	2	
♦ 2			
♠ A	10	7	2
♥ A	4	3	2
♣ 8	7		
♦ A	9	8	
♠ K	Q	J	4

Z dealt and bid no trump, the score being love all. A and Y passed, B calling two hearts with the double object of showing his partner what to lead and of pushing Z up a bit. Z passed, confident that B could

never go game in hearts, but doubtful if he could go game himself.

Y declared three diamonds, which B promptly passed. This gives Z a pretty problem in inference.

Y did not overcall the no-trumper on the first round; therefore he has not a bust. He can have nothing in hearts or he would support the no-trumper now instead of shifting. Z's cards make it look as if he had nothing in spades either, so that in order to justify his shift he should have a long and strong diamond suit and something good in clubs. On this reasoning, having the hearts stopped himself, Z went back to his no-trumper, bidding three tricks.

This looks like bad judgment, because Z pays too much attention to his partner and does not make sufficient allowance for the strength in B's hand, which is opposed to the original no trump call, while Y's bid had a declared no-trumper to assist it from the start.

Z should have reasoned that hearts would be led at once, and as Y has intimated that he has nothing in that suit the adversaries will clear it up on the first rounds. Then unless Y holds six diamonds, all good, and the ace of clubs or spades, the four or five hearts in B's hand and that much wanted black ace will score against Z and set his contract.

When his partner shifted Z should have taken the hint and left it at three diamonds, which he would just have made by taking the finesse in trumps after winning the first heart trick with the ace. But on his no trump contract, after passing two rounds of hearts, Z dare not take the diamond finesse with the established

hearts and two aces against him, so he tried to drop the jack. That failing, he held on to his tenace in diamonds and led the spade. B put on the ace, made his two hearts and the ace of clubs and set the contract for 100 points.

Here is a case in which the adversary's partner gives the original declarer the cue:

♥ 9 8 6		
♣ 5 2		
♦ J 8 5 4 2		
♠ 10 8 6		
♥ ..... ♣ A K 10 9 6 3 ♦ 9 7 6 ♠ A K 4 3	Y A B Z	♥ A 10 4 3 ♣ 7 4 ♦ A 10 2 ♠ Q 9 7 2
♥ K Q J 7 5 2		
♣ Q J 8		
♦ K Q		
♠ J 5		

Z dealt and bid a heart, A two clubs, Y and B passing. Z went two hearts, there being as yet no sign from either of the partners; A and Y both passed, but now B bid three clubs. In spite of this Z went on to three hearts, although it should have been evident to him at this stage of the bidding that B had more than his average of two probable tricks and that therefore Y could not have anything.

If Y has nothing it is not only impossible for Z to go game in hearts, but it is highly improbable that he

can come anywhere near his contract, especially without an ace in his hand.

In spite of his partner's assistance A did not imagine that he could go game in clubs, so he passed, but B doubled three hearts and on the play they set the contract for 300 points.

A led two rounds of clubs and on his partner's down and out echo forced him. B overtrumped dummy and as he inferred A must have something in diamonds or spades to support his clubs he led the ace and another trump, so as to exhaust dummy, and all the tricks that Z made were five trumps and a diamond.

Had A bid four clubs, as the cards lie he would have gone game by getting a diamond discard on the first trick, catching the jack of trumps on the next trick and the queen on the fourth by putting dummy in again with a diamond so as to get a finesse against Z. This would give A a small slam. Even without the finesse in trumps he can get five by cards, which is game in clubs under the new count.

Here is a good example of two nearly equal hands bidding against each other, with the result that the first to drop out when he finds game for either side impossible is the winner.

♥ J 4 3		
♦ Q 6 5 4		
♦ 8 6		
♣ Q 6 5 4		
♥ K 10 9 7 2	Y	♥ Q 5
♣ A K 3	A	♣ J 10 8 7 2
♦ K 9 2	B	♦ Q 7 4 3
♦ J 9	Z	♦ A 8
♥ A 8 6		
♦ 9		
♦ A J 10 5		
♣ K 10 7 3 2		

Z dealt and bid a royal; which he thought better and safer than no trumps. Although he has no sure tricks in the spade suit, he has the tricks outside to justify the call. A bid two hearts, Y and B both passing. With the hearts stopped and his ability to ruff clubs on the second round, Z bid two royals and A went three hearts.

This would seem to show bad judgment on A's part, because if Z has the side cards to justify him in bidding two royals after a suit is declared against him and after his partner has refused to assist him when he was first overcalled, A can never hope to go game in hearts, and he may not even make good on his contract. Z took this view of his hand as compared to A's and dropped the royal, because he saw no chance for game and was not in the least afraid of A's going game either.

On the play, Y led the top spade, B putting on the ace and leading the queen of trumps. Z won the trick

and led his singleton club, as he could kill dummy's re-entry in diamonds. A tried to drop the jack of trumps and, failing in this, took two for one, leaving Y in.

Two more rounds of spades and A had to ruff. He then played a Deschapelles coup by leading the king of diamonds, so as to make the queen good to bring in the clubs after the queen was out of the way. Z held off the diamond and the contract failed for two tricks.

Z correctly estimated the strength of his own hand as against A's. He could have made his contract if he had bid three royals, but he could not have gone game.

Here is an illustration of bad judgment in estimating the value of an original bid, which is always forced:

♥ 10 9	♦ K Q J 3
♦ A K 7 5 3	♣ 3
♦ K 10 7	♦ J 6 3
♦ A 10 5	♦ K Q J 6 4
♥ 4 2	♥ K Q J 3
♦ Q 10 9 6 4	♦ J 6 3
♦ 9 8 5 4	♦ K Q J 6 4
♦ 8 2	♦ K Q J 6 4
Y	
A	B
Z	
♥ A 8 7 6 5	
♦ J 8	
♦ A Q 2	
♦ 9 7 3	

Z bid a heart. Although he has only one trick in the suit itself, he has a trick or two in an outside suit to make up for it: A passed and Y went no trumps, counting on his partner for two heart tricks. B, hoping to

drive Z back to the hearts as much as anything, bid two royals, which Z passed.

Y, with spades safely stopped, and still banking on his partner's hearts, went on to two no trumps, figuring to make at least four of his clubs, two tricks in his partner's hand and two outside tricks in his own.

This is only another instance of the oversight that one continually sees at the card table. When Z refuses to assist the no-trumper, he shows that he cannot stop the spades, so the first lead will probably clear up that suit against Y's declaration, and the declarer himself has nothing cleared up that he can go on with when he gets in, unless his partner turns out to have wonderful cards in hearts.

Winning the game under such circumstances being problematical, Y's proper course was to let B try to make good on his two royals, as it is clearly impossible for B to go game in that suit if Z has what Y credits him with, and Y could use his strength to much better advantage by playing for 50 a trick than for 10.

Y could have set the contract in royals for 50 points. On his own attempt to win two by cards at no trumps he failed by one trick, losing 50 points instead of winning them, but he had forty aces to console himself with.

There are some persons, of course, who object to the whole theory upon which such safe bidding is founded and who cannot see why it is not well worth while to score from 12 to 20 points toward game, even at the risk of giving the other side 50. They will bid just as eagerly for the chance to make two by cards at hearts

or diamonds as they would to win the rubber, even when they know or should know from the bidding that it is practically impossible for them to make a trick more than their contract.

The examination of a large number of score cards picked up at clubs in which the average play is a hundred rubbers a day shows that only about once in eleven times is it of the slightest use for the declarer to be anything up on the score of an unfinished game and that in each of the other cases the game would have been won from zero.

If the game can be won, it is supposed to be worth an equity of about 125 points in the rubber, and as long as there is any chance of winning it a player is fully justified in taking some risk of falling short of his contract in the attempt to go game. This situation often arises in a no-trumper when the declarer takes a chance on a certain card being in his partner's hand. If it is there he goes game; if it is not, he loses perhaps a trick or two.

But when the bidding shows that it is manifestly impossible for the declaration to win the game, and another player is bidding for the privilege of scoring 18 or 20 points at the most, at the risk of losing 50 or 100, why not let him try it?

## XVI

### DECLARING ON LENGTH

If one were asked to name the most common fault in bidding at the new count, the first thing that would occur to the observant player would probably be the tendency to declare on length in the first round of the bids, regardless of the fact that the suit is not headed by winning cards.

While this fault is most frequently found on the dealer's side of the table, there are many persons who carry it to the second hand, although the excuse for it is based on a different theory. Both are wrong, because both overlook the primary object of the original bids, which is to give information to a partner, who may have something better in his hand, or who may be able to support the call. The error is in imagining that the object of the bids is to settle upon the winning declaration as soon as possible.

The dealer's excuse usually is that a suit of six trumps is good for four tricks, regardless of their value as high cards, which is above the average value of a hand, and the suit should therefore be declared. In bridge, to which they are probably more accustomed, this is true, because the suit picked out by the dealer is the trump. In auction it is not true, because the suit named is not the trump, but is simply the suit mentioned as the longest among the dealer's thirteen cards.

The second player's excuse usually is that if he does

not make some declaration while he has the chance to do so cheaply, it may be too expensive on the second round and that if he does not show his partner what he has, that partner will not know what to do after the third hand has declared.

The reply to both these excuses is that if the bids are made for the purpose of giving information it is highly important that the information should not be misleading, because if it means one thing at one time and something else at another time it is worse than useless, because it cannot be relied on as the foundation for sound bidding.

There are two ways in which the partner may be misled. He may let the bid stand, thinking it will suit the combined hands as well as anything else he could do, or he may shift to something he thinks better, relying upon the suit named in the original declaration to help him out. In either case he will find that he is trying to drive with a putter.

Another source of danger lies in the opportunity given to the adversaries to sit still and defeat the contract, instead of undertaking a more or less risky one of their own, especially when they are behind on the total score and more anxious to get back some penalties than to win the game.

The most common sources of loss can be traced to the dealer's original declarations, which seem to be prompted by the idea that as he must say something, he might as well bid his hand a little beyond its value as a little below it, and take a chance that his partner can pull it off. There seems to be a rooted prejudice

among certain players against calling a spade with a six-card suit in the hand.

Here is a case in which it is the partner that is misled into a too forward declaration.

♥ K Q 5 4		
♣ 4		
♦ A K J 9 6		
♠ Q 10 9		
♥ 10 6 3 2	Y	♥ A J 9 8
♣ K 10 2	A	♣ A Q 9
♦ 10 5 3 2	B	♦ Q
♠ J 2	Z	♠ A K 8 4 3
♥ 7		
♣ J 8 7 6 5 3		
♦ 8 7 4		
♠ 7 6 5		

Z dealt and declared a club on his six-card suit, which the authorities are pretty well agreed should be good for four tricks on the average. Such a declaration would be perfectly correct if the game were bridge and the suit worth 6 a trick, because it would be a certainty that the clubs would remain the trump suit.

A passed, and Y, figuring that his partner had at least two tricks in his hand, and sure winners in clubs, went no trumps. B, who was about to go no trumps himself, but did not feel equal to two royals against the declaration, passed, and Z had to overcall the no-trumper to show that he had nothing but a bust in clubs.

This is the wrong end for such a call. When the original bid is no trumps it is right for the third hand

to overcall it with a bust if he has a long trump suit, because the no-trumper was declared on its own merits. But when the no-trumper is declared on the strength of a suit shown, as in this case, the partner should not overcall with a two-trick bid unless he was willing to bid two tricks on his original hand if pushed to it by an adversary, which is far from true of Z's cards.

A led the spade jack, the queen covered and B won with the king, returning the singleton diamond. Y won this and led the trump, upon which B put the ace, so as to be sure of stopping the lead. The spade ace exhausted A and another round let him make a trump.

A returned the diamond, which B trumped with the nine. Another spade from B forced Z to ruff in with the club to protect himself, as dummy had no trumps left. Another diamond from A let B make his queen of trumps and get the lead. B made his ace of hearts at once, as he could then count Z's hand. This set the contract for three tricks.

Here is a hand which shows how a partner may be led to believe that the original call suits him as well as anything he could do.

♠ Q 7 6 ♣ A 6 ♦ K 10 8 5 ♦ K 10 3  ♠ A J 4 ♣ K 10 9 8 4 ♦ 7 6 4 ♦ 6 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 5px;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Y</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">A</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">B</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Z</span> </div>	♠ K ♣ Q J 7 2 ♦ A Q J 3 ♦ A Q 8 7  ♠ 10 9 8 5 3 2 ♣ 5 3 ♦ 9 2 ♦ J 9 5 2
---	--	---

Z dealt and declared a heart, the suit being, according to the bridge idea, good for four tricks. According to the auction idea it is good for nothing and the declaration should have been a spade. A did not care to go as high as two clubs, so he passed. Y thought the make would suit him, so he passed also, and B was content.

On the play, A led the club, Y putting on the ace and returning the suit at once, ready to ruff it in either hand. A won the trick and led his short suit through the spade king, B coming right back with it and letting A ruff the third round. Then A went through the diamonds in the same way.

B led another spade and A put on the ace of trumps, leading another diamond, which B won, returning the ace of diamonds. Z ruffed this trick with the eight, A going over it with the jack, after which B's king of trumps still made, setting the contract for three tricks.

Sometimes these weak bids give an adversary, who

would have declared the suit himself, an opportunity to double instead. Here is a case of that kind:

♥ 10 9			
♦ A 8 6			
♦ J 10 6 2			
♦ 8 7 6 3			
♥ 2	Y		♥ A K 8 7 4
♦ K Q 5 4 3	A	B	♦ J 10 2
♦ A Q 8 5 3			♦ K 7
♦ A 5	Z		♦ K 10 4
♥ Q J 6 5 3			
♦ 9 7			
♦ 9 4			
♦ Q J 9 2			

Z dealt and bid a heart, which A and Y passed. B would have bid a heart himself had Z started with a spade, as he should have done, but against the declaration B doubled and neither Z nor his partner could do anything to pull themselves out.

Having every suit stopped, A led the trump, and B took out two rounds at once, A discarding the eight of diamonds as a reverse discard, which brought the king of diamonds from B, the seven following, and letting A win with the queen.

Here came a rather pretty play. In order to make dummy lead a diamond while A still held the ace, A led the king of clubs, putting dummy in. Then, when Y led the diamond, Z had to trump it or let the ace make. B discarded a spade and Z led the spade queen. This gave A the chance to get right in and lead his ace of diamonds, B discarding a club. After Z got this

trick with the trump all he could make was his queen of trumps, so his contract was set for 300 points.

The second hand is often seen to fall into this same error of bidding on length without the winning cards when he should pass and wait for the second round. He forgets that the suit he names is not the trump and will never be the trump unless it suits three other players besides himself. Here is a case which is typical of these second hand bids on length only.

♥ K 9 6		
♣ A 9 6 5 4		
♦ A 5 2		
♠ 6 4		
♥ 10	Y	♥ A 8 7
♣ K 2	A	♣ Q J 10 3
♦ Q 10 9 7 6 4	B	♦ K 3
♠ J 9 8 2	Z	♠ K Q 10 3
♥ Q J 5 4 3 2		
♣ 8 7		
♦ J 8		
♠ A 7 5		

Z dealt and bid a spade, refusing to call a heart on the first round with a hand which was not strong enough to go two hearts on and which had not the winning hearts at the head. A, in spite of this principle, or in ignorance of it, declared a diamond, which Y passed. When it got round to B, he figured that if his partner had a sure trick or two in diamonds, the combination was good enough for a no-trumper, which he bid. As A had not exactly a bust, having possible stoppers in three suits, he let it go at no trumps.

Z led the four of hearts and B, who missed the two smaller ones, passed two rounds, so as to exhaust Y. Then he started to clear the diamonds, that being a longer suit than the clubs and A having re-entries in the spades.

Y won the diamond trick and led a spade, as the best chance to get Z in with the established hearts, and in his discards on the hearts, Y echoed in clubs, so that he made his ace at the end, setting the contract for two tricks.

In this hand, if we give A the two tricks that he should have held to justify his declaration, one of them being a sure trick in the suit called, say ace and ten instead of queen and ten, the no-trumper is easily good for the odd trick before B loses the lead.

There are many occasions in which the adversaries are more anxious to win a few penalties than to go game even, because they are behind on the total score. Good players always make allowance for such conditions in their estimate of the value of the bids and take into consideration the likelihood of a pass from a strong hand when that side is behind in the score.

While those who play for penalties in this way may not always make as much as they expected, it should be remembered that even if they make only a trick, it is worth more than anything they could make on their own declaration, short of the game. Here is an instance of an effort to win back something.

♥ A Q 9	
♦ Q 7 5 3	
◆ A J 6 2	
♠ A Q J 9	
♥ K J 5 3 2	Y
♣ A J	A B
♦ K 7 4	
♠ 8 7 3	Z
	♥ 7 6
	♣ K 9 6 5 3
	♦ 8
	♠ K 10 6 5 2
♥ 10 8 4	
♣ 10 8 4 2	
♦ Q 10 9 5 3	
♠ 4	

Z dealt and bid a spade. A, who was anxious to get the full benefit of being ahead in the score and to win a big rubber at once, declared a heart. Y has a very good no-trumper and the heart suit stopped twice, but he is 200 behind on the total and has no game in, so he thinks it better to try for some penalties while he has the chance, as he knows A and B cannot go game on anything, so he doubles. B was afraid of going into deeper water if he called two clubs or a royal, and being a game in, he concluded to let matters stand.

Y led the ace of spades and followed it with the queen, Z trumping B's king. Z then led the ten of diamonds, so as to cover dummy's card, the eight. The moment his ten held the trick he led the trump and Y won the first round with the queen over the jack and returned the nine, so as to force the king but still leave himself with the best trump, to prevent A from drawing all the trumps and still holding the lead.

A started to clear the clubs, winning the second round with the king in B's hand and ruffing the next. When he led a spade, Y won it, picked up one of A's trumps with his ace and then forced the last trump with the club, making his ace and jack of diamonds at the end and setting the contract for 200 points, evening up the score.

## XVII

### BIDS INFLUENCE BIDS

One frequently hears a discussion of the play of certain hands in which the score is not stated and the motive is therefore left uncertain. In the same way one may often hear an argument about the propriety of a certain bid or bids at auction, without any allusion to the other bids, which must, or should have had, a large influence on the bid under discussion.

It is very difficult to lay down any rules for the bids beyond those of the dealer and his partner on the first round, with an occasional remark about the second player. After that everything depends on what has been declared by others, because that is what will show whether any particular bid is a judicious one or not.

The difference between a partner's support and his shift is enough to change the whole aspect of a declaration, and the interference of an adversary may affect a bid in two ways: it may show that he is afraid of it, or it may indicate that he can afford to ignore it and proceed with his own game.

In many cases we may see one player trying to manage things for the best interest of the two hands, when his partner steps in and spoils it all, although with the best intentions in the world. In such situations there is always the opportunity for the display of skill and finesse in the bidding, such as no rules can cover,

everything in the bids being dependent on the bids that have gone before. Take this case:

♥ 4 3		
♦ A Q 4 2		
◆ Q 10 9 8 7 3		
♠ 5		
♥ J 9 6	Y	♥ K Q 8 7 2
♣ J	A	♦ 10 9 5
♦ A J 5 4 2	B	♦ K 6
♠ A K Q 8	Z	♠ J 7 2
♥ A 10 5		
♣ K 8 7 6 3		
♦ .....		
♠ 10 9 6 4 3		

Z dealt and bid a spade, which A doubled, showing two stoppers in the suit. Y pulled his partner out with a diamond and A saw that things were in excellent shape for him to win some penalties, as he has told his partner his good suit is spades and if that suit is led at once, they can probably force Y often enough to break up his hand.

But B does not know anything about A's plans, and declares a heart, on the strength of his partner's stoppers in spades and the position of his own king of diamonds over Y. Z passed, as he cannot support his partner and is afraid to shift, in the face of the suit declarations on each side.

B's bid induced A to try to drive Y back to the diamonds, so he went no trumps, hoping Y would bid two diamonds, but Y refused to be coaxed, his partner not having shown any signs of life, and B also passed.

When it got round to Z, that player knew that A must have the diamonds safely stopped, and he had already shown that he could stop the spades. B, on the other hand, had declared hearts, which looked to Z as if these were the three suits on which the no-trumper was built. If this inference was correct, the only chance left for Y and Z was the clubs, and Z bid two tricks in that suit, which A promptly passed, showing that he had no stoppers there and had to abandon his no-trumper.

B went two hearts, showing he could do nothing to stop the clubs either, and Z passed. When it got round to Y, he supported his partner with three clubs and that was the winning declaration, doubled by A, who did not see how it was possible for Y and Z to make nine tricks against A's cards with B's hearts to help him.

Here we have an example of three players for whose bids no rule could be laid down, each bidding on two different suits and one of them making three different declarations. Z bid a spade first and then a club. A doubled a spade first and then shifted to no trumps and finally doubled a club. Y bid a diamond first and then shifted to the club suit.

Not one of these bids except the first one by Y is based on the player's own cards, but all of them rest on the information and influence of the bids made by the others. The dealer's original call is nothing but a pass, as he does not want spades for trumps at two a trick.

On the play, A led the spade to have a look, before

starting his partner's heart suit. On the next trick he led the heart and Z got in. After that, A and B were helpless until the contract was safe, as Y and Z never let go of the cross ruff.

Upon winning the heart trick with the ace, Z led a spade and dummy trumped it, returning the small diamond, which Z trumped. Another spade from Z and dummy got another ruff, after which he led another diamond for Z to trump, and on the fourth round of spades the queen of trumps shut out B, who discarded a heart. On the next diamond lead from dummy, B put in the nine of trumps, although he knew his partner had the ace of the suit led, and Z over-trumped and led the spade.

The next diamond from dummy, B won with the ten of trumps, Z discarding a heart. Then B led a small trump which A won, returning a heart and Z made the eight of trumps at the end, giving him three by cards and his contract.

As a rule, the fourth player is in the best position at the table to declare, because he gets a line on the situation from the bids of the preceding players. Nothing will show more clearly how much at sea this fourth player can be than to have a hand come along in which no one has anything to say until it comes round to him. Here is a case of this kind:

♥ K J 9 7		
♣ 8 4		
♦ Q 9 7		
♠ A J 10 7		
♥ 10 6 5 4 2	Y	♥ A 3
♣ J 6	A	♣ A K 9 7 5 2
♦ 10 5	B	♦ A 6
♠ K 8 6 5	Z	♠ Q 4 3
♥ Q 8		
♣ Q 10 3		
♦ K J 8 4 3 2		
♠ 9 2		

Z dealt and bid a spade, as he was not one of those who bid on length alone. A passed, and Y did not see his way to declare anything with the prospect of a weak dummy, so he passed.

Now B finds himself in about the same position as if he had dealt the cards, and he can declare either clubs or no trumps. As his partner's passing a spade call does not necessarily mean weakness, and may be nothing but a waiting move, whereas the declarations of Y and Z are clearly from weakness, B concluded to call the no-trumper instead of the club.

Y having refused to take Z out of the spade call, Z refused to risk a diamond contract for two tricks and passed. A did not see any reason to shift and Y was glad to be out of it, so B got the declaration, and, as is often the case when bids are made in the dark in this way, he got set for fifty points.

Z opened his long diamond suit, and B tried to drop the queen of clubs in two leads. Failing in this, there

was nothing for it but to go on, and hope the diamonds were not all in one hand. Y dropped the seven of spades as a reverse discard, wishing his partner to know what to do when the diamonds ran out. This kept B from discarding the spade queen, and forced him to let go a club, but the spade ace set the contract.

Here is a hand in which the bidding, although simple, is based entirely on the inferences from preceding bids.

♥ A Q 10 6 5		
♣ .....		
♦ K J 9 7		
♠ K 9 6 4		
♥ .....		
♣ A Q 9 5 4 3	Y	♥ 9 8 7 4 3
♦ 8 6 5 4 3 2	A . B	♣ K 10 7 6
♠ 8	Z	♦ .....
		♠ Q J 7 5
♥ K J 2		
♣ J 8 2		
♦ A Q 10		
♠ A 10 3 2		

Z dealt and bid no trumps. A, with his two-suiter, bid the cheaper suit first, calling two clubs. Y declared two hearts, B and Z both passing, so that it came round to A again.

A's first inference is that neither Y nor Z can stop the club suit or they would go on with the no-trumper, therefore of the three missing honors, king jack ten, B must have the king, unless it is blank in the hand of Y or Z.

On the strength of this inference and his ability to

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ruff hearts, A bid three clubs, and on the strength of his ability to ruff those clubs with his partner's no-trumper to back him up, Y bid three hearts, B and Z passing again. Z's passing, it may be observed, being based on the inference that the ace king and queen of clubs are all against his no-trumper.

It is now clear to A that B has not a trick in his hand except in clubs, because Z must have bid his no-trumper on three suits originally and two of these suits are red. If Y can run hearts up to three tricks, they must have that suit solid between them and Z has the diamonds and spades.

If this is the situation, A can see that Y and Z will easily go game in hearts if they are left with the make, and that if A shifts to the diamonds, they will double him and beat him, so he sticks to the clubs, bidding four tricks, fully expecting to take a loss of 50 or 100 points. Now Y passes, as he has not heard a word from his partner since the original dealer's bid.

Z knows that his partner must have something pretty good outside the heart suit itself to justify him in going so far as three tricks. He also knows that Y cannot have anything in clubs, or he would have supported the no-trumper. But Z is afraid of B, who must have all the clubs that A does not hold and may be strong in one of the other suits, such as all the diamonds against Y's spades.

This is a point that the beginner often forgets, when relying on the partner for support to his bid, such as Y's support for his hearts, that this may not be in two suits but in one, and that some silent adversary may

have the other suit. Z is not afraid of B's hearts, as Y and Z must have all the winning cards between them, so he bids four hearts, requiring A to call a little slam in clubs, which he refuses to do, as he might lose 300 or 400 points on such a contract.

The play gives us a good example of the wisdom of playing for a long suit instead of for a ruff when you have four or five trumps, however small. B led the club king and forced Y, who saw that if he drew all the trumps he could make five by cards at once. When A fell out, discarding a diamond, Y saw that the long trump in B's hand would bring in the whole club suit, so he stopped, and led the ace of diamonds from dummy.

Now if B ruffs this trick and leads the trump, to get two for one, he will sacrifice his advantage, as Y can pull all his trumps and make all his diamonds, so he continues the force with the club, which Y refuses to take, as it is clear that he cannot go game that way. He must wait until dummy can ruff the club, so Y discards a losing spade.

Here is a little inference lesson for the beginner in A's play. He sees that B must have as many trumps as Y, or Y would have drawn them all the moment he got in, and as Y wants to get the majority of trumps by forcing B again, it is A's game to prevent this and to avoid forcing B with a diamond until all the clubs have been made, because if A makes the mistake of forcing his partner again, Y and Z go game. A third round of clubs and then a force not only saves the game but sets the contract for 50 points.

The manner in which a player supports or refuses to support his partner is often a means of inference which will completely change the character of the bids. Take this case:

♥ J 9 8 6 4 3	
♣ 6	
♦ 10 7 6	
♠ 9 5 4	
♥ 2	Y
♣ K J 10 7 5 4	A B
♦ J 8 3 2	Z
♠ 10 3	♥ A K Q 5
	♣ 9 3
	♦ Q 9
	♠ K Q J 8 7
♥ 10 7	
♣ A Q 8 2	
♦ A K 5 4	
♠ A 6 2	

Z dealt and bid no trump. A passed, not feeling equal to two clubs against a no-trumper, and Y bid two hearts, to show that unless hearts were trumps his hand was a bust, which would be of no assistance to a no-trumper.

Some players would double with B's cards, but he looked deeper into the situation and the inferences possible from the bids. If Z has declared on three suits, the missing suit in his hand was the heart. Then he must have the ace of spades, and as good as an ace in both clubs and diamonds. The thing for B to find out is which of these two he is weaker in, and with a view to that end B bids two royals, which Z passes, on the theory that while he cannot go game in no trumps with a bust on the table, nor in clubs with the spades

cleared the first lead, neither can B go game in royals.

A fully expected Y to return to the heart suit, as Z did not go on with the no-trumper, so he bid three clubs, to show B what to lead, but Y passed. Here we have a case of each player in turn refusing to support his partner, and both abandoning his own declaration on the second round. This shows B that Z holds the spade ace and the club ace, and that his extra strength is in diamonds, but that he has not enough of them to declare that suit. A must be very weak in spades or he would support B instead of switching.

What most persons would have done on the strength of these inferences is a question, but B went two no trumps, in spite of Z's original declaration, and what is more he made it, and won the game on the hand into the bargain.

Z led the heart ten, which B won with the ace, leading the club nine. Z passed it, and so did dummy. Another club, and Z passed again, as he knew that cleaned up B, and he held tenace over A. But A came back with a small diamond and B finessed the nine, as the game hinged on the position of the ten. Z won with the king and led another heart, which B won with the king, leading the queen of diamonds and putting Z in again.

When Z tried to get a club lead by returning the diamond, giving A two tricks, A avoided the trap by leading a spade after B had discarded his small heart and then Z saw that unless he made his ace of clubs at once he would take it home with him, as a spade lead would give B every trick.

## XVIII

### ASSIST OR DOUBLE?

The more one sees of the bidding tactics at royals the more clearly one realizes the great difference between the declarations of the expert and those the beginner would make on the same cards. In looking for the reason underlying this difference one is inevitably led to the conclusion that it is due, more than anything else, to the expert's ability to infer correctly the cards upon which the bids of the other players at the table are based.

If we take as an example the difference between the double and the assist, we shall find, on watching the play in any ordinary rubber, that the novice is always more anxious to assist, to try to secure the contract and go for the game, than he is to double and defeat his adversaries. The expert, on the other hand, not only seems more keenly alive to the possibilities of gain from penalties, but looks upon the double as a useful method of conveying information, which will often supplement that given by his original bid on his own cards.

Here is a hand that recently came under the writer's notice which illustrates this point in the management of the double, when it takes the place of the assist, and also shows that it needs a keen player to benefit from it.

♥ 9 5		
♦ A 9 7 4		
◊ 6		
♠ A K Q J 3 2		
♥ Q J 6 2	Y	♥ 7 3
♣ J 10 8	A B	♣ K Q 3
◊ 8 4		◊ A K J 10 7 5 2
♠ 9 8 7 5	Z	♠ 10
♥ A K 10 8 4		
♦ 6 5 2		
◊ Q 9 3		
♠ 6 4		

Z dealt and bid a heart, which A passed. Y did not think the hearts could be as good as his spades, so he shifted to a royal and B declared two diamonds.

With his two sure tricks in hearts and a probable stopper in diamonds, nine players out of ten would have supported their partner with two royals, as Z may legitimately consider his hand as good for three tricks, which is one more than his average support would be.

But Z does not look at it that way. He leaves the matter of going on to two tricks in royals to his partner, who alone knows whether the cards are worth it or not, and simply doubles the two diamonds, which is something the novice would probably never dream of, as Z has only three to the queen, yet it is a perfectly safe call.

A passed, and Y, who was not as keen a player as his partner, Z, unthinkingly went two royals, and when B overcalled with three diamonds, Y went on to three royals, which was the winning declaration.

B led the king of diamonds and then stopped, for fear of making the queen good for a trick. He then led the king of clubs, which Y won. Y took out four rounds of trumps and led a heart, dummy playing the king and returning the ace, upon which B fell out, having discarded a heart and two diamonds on the trumps.

As the cards lay, Y could not get another trick, no matter what he played from Z's hand, as he could neither establish the hearts nor make the queen of diamonds, so he had to stop at three by cards, or three points short of the game.

This was entirely his own fault, because his partner's double of the two-diamond call gave him the key to the situation as clearly as if the cards had been laid on the table.

Z's original declaration showed two tricks in hearts, or one sure in hearts and one outside. The moment Z doubled the diamond bid, the outside trick is marked in that suit. But the double shows something else. It shows that he is inviting his partner to shift to no trumps if his spades are good enough, or to go on to two royals if the spades are not quite up to no-trump standard.

Y should have been able to count up the full value of the two hands to a certainty as good for six tricks in spades, one in clubs, one in diamonds and one in hearts. That is nine tricks and the game at no trumps, without the possibility of loss. He can count all day and not make another trick out of it if spades are trumps, therefore he is just as sure not to go game in royals as he is to go game in no trumps.

Had Y bid the two no trumps, as he should have done after his partner's double, and been overcalled with three diamonds by B, he would still have been bidding on a certainty to go three no trumps, which would have forced B to go five in diamonds or quit. This of course means that Z is a good player, whose bidding can be absolutely relied on.

Play the hand as a no-trumper and it would be B's lead. He would naturally start with his long suit, and with his clubs to get in with he would go right on and clear it. But so far as winning the game goes, whether B clears up a diamond trick for Z or not, makes no difference to Y, as he does not need the diamond trick when he finds that Z has two sure tricks in hearts. These, with the black suits, are enough.

Here is another hand in which a player has an opportunity to infer very closely the distribution of the cards or at least the suits, from the fact that his partner assists him instead of doubling the adversary.

♥ Q 4 2		
♣ J 9		
♦ Q J 10 8 5 4		
♠ 10 3		
♥ 7 6 3	Y	♥ K 10 9
♣ K Q 7 5 4 3	A B	♣ 8 2
♦ A 3		♦ 7 2
♠ Q 7	Z	♠ A K J 9 6 2
♥ A J 8 5		
♣ A 10 6		
♦ K 9 6		
♠ 8 5 4		

Z dealt and bid a spade, A said a club and Y bid a diamond, upon which B switched to a royal, instead of assisting his partner.

Z supported Y by declaring two diamonds and A dropped his own suit to bid two royals, upon which Y blithely called three diamonds, which B refused to overcall with three royals, as he did not see any chance for game in his hand. When it got round to A, he doubled the three diamonds and every one passed.

The hand was rather peculiarly played, with a number of shifts. B stopped after two rounds of spades, but finally concluded to lead a third, which Y won, leading the jack of clubs and taking the finesse. A got this trick with the king, falsecarding, but on looking at the trick and missing the deuce, he concluded that his partner had no more or was echoing with that card alone left in his hand, so he led the queen and succeeded in knocking the ace and nine together, but left the ten good against him.

Y led the small heart from dummy, so as to make the queen if the king were with A, but B won the trick and led the trump, as Y had avoided that suit. When A came back with a club, Y's trump shut out B's, and after Y had picked up the small trumps from A and B he led a heart and took the finesse, but fell just a trick short on his contract, A making the ace of trumps and a club, B making two spades and a heart.

This was Y's fault, his inattention to his partner's assist and its exact meaning leading him just a trick beyond his depth. There was no necessity to overcall, as A and B had no chance to go game on their declaration.

As soon as Z assists Y's call, it shows that he has more than an average hand, that is, he is probably good for more than two tricks. He cannot have a sure trick in spades or he would have doubled, as we see Z did in the previous hand. His tricks cannot be both in one suit, or he would have declared it at the start, as the dealer is always willing to declare a suit in which he has two sure tricks if he has a third probable outside, no matter how short the two-trick suit may be. Then Z's three assisting tricks must be in hearts, clubs, and diamonds.

Now, if Z cannot hold two sure tricks in the same suit, he cannot have both ace and king of diamonds, so one trick in that suit is surely against Y, leaving him only five trump tricks to count on. He has nothing in the other suits himself, therefore his partner's two tricks, one in hearts and one in clubs, are all that is left.

Count these up and the total is seven possible tricks; yet Y bids to make nine.

A very common mistake made by the novice lies in calculating on a stopped suit as if it were a fighting unit when there is no certainty that the suit will ever be led and he cannot lead it more than once or twice himself. Stoppers are not trick winners unless the suit is played out until the stoppers become the best of the suit, and the adversaries are not going to do that for the declarer if they can help it.

Here is a hand which illustrates the fallacy of using a stopped suit as a basis for the bidding.

♥ A K 10 7		
♦ A 8 4		
♦ A K J 6 5 3		
♦ .....		
♥ Q 9 8 4	Y	♥ 6 5 3
♦ .....	A      B	♦ K Q J 10 5 3
♦ Q 10 7 4 2	Z	♦ 9
♦ A 6 3 2		♦ K 8 7
♥ J 2		
♦ 9 7 6 2		
♦ 8		
♦ Q J 10 9 5 4		

Z dealt and bid two royals at the start, intending to show that his hand was good for nothing unless that suit was the trump. A bid of one royal should always show at least one sure trick at the head of the spade suit.

When A passed, Y, who held everything but the spades and who credited Z with the power to stop that suit for him, declared two no trumps so as to overcall the two royals. This every one passed.

B led his long suit and A discarded a small spade, showing that he was not beginning any reverse echo in that suit. Y led two rounds of diamonds, and then, realizing that A had that suit bottled up, tried two rounds of hearts, on the long chance of dropping the queen, only to establish tenace against himself in that suit also. Not knowing what else to do, he led a diamond and A took the trick, made his two good queens and then led a small spade to his partner's echo of the eight of spades, so that B got in and made all the clubs. A making the spade ace at the end.

This set Y's no-trumper for three tricks, as all Y could get was two in each red suit and the ace of clubs, the stoppers in spades not being of the slightest use to him.

Y did not pay close enough attention to the full meaning of the original call of two tricks, which usually is that the suit called has not the winning cards at the head of it which are necessary to help out a no-trumper and also that the rest of the hand is a bust.

Looked at from this point, Y's bid is simply a gamble on dropping the queen of diamonds in two leads and making six straight tricks in that suit, because unless Y can accomplish this he cannot go game. It is quite true that the spade suit is stopped, but who is going to lead spades and establish the suit for Y's dummy? Had Y left it at two royals, as his partner's opening bid advised, Z could have just made it.

Sometimes the mistake is on the other side of the table and the dealer bids one trick in a suit when he should have said two, and then has not the nerve to bid three tricks to undeceive his partner on the next round of the bids. Here is a hand that shows where this mistake may land a player:

♥ A 8 4		
♦ A K Q 8 6 4 3		
♦ 6		
♦ 8 4		
♥ K J 10 3 2		Y
♣ J		A
♦ 9		B
♦ A K Q 9 7 6		Z
♥ 9 6 5		♥ Q 7
♣ 10 9 2		♣ 7 5
♦ J 10 7 5 4 3 2		♦ A K Q 8
♦ .....		♦ J 10 5 3 2

Z dealt and bid one diamond, when he should have said two, or passed by calling a spade. A bid a heart, on the theory that as either spades or hearts would go game the spades were the better for trick winning and the hearts for trumps, each suit needing four by cards to win.

Y credited his partner with a sure trick or two in diamonds and with his stopper in the adversaries' declared suit, hearts, he promptly went no trumps. B went two hearts, as he had more than the average two tricks in his hand for support, and Z was afraid to call three diamonds, so he passed. When A passed, Y went two no trumps to overcall B and all passed.

It was very fortunate for B that he did not lead his partner's suit and let Y right in, but took a look with the king of diamonds first. The first round accounted for the whole diamond suit, so B went on with two more rounds, to make what he had while he was in, as he saw dummy would never be in to lead a diamond again.

On the second and third rounds of diamonds, A discarded the deuce of hearts and the jack of clubs, which B took to mean that he did not think much of his own heart suit and had nothing more in clubs. If this is so, Y has about seven clubs and his re-entry card for the suit may be either a heart or a spade.

As A had discarded a small heart, and as dummy had no spades at all, B took a chance on the spade lead, starting with the jack and following it with the ten, so that all six spades made, setting the contract for 200 points without doubling, as all that Y made was the ace of hearts and three clubs.

This is the fault of Z's original bid in calling a suit for one trick when he has not a winning card in it. Give Y a chance by making Z start with a spade and Y will call a club, which Z could have supported and on which they could have made four by cards and four honors, which is a gain of 48 points, instead of a loss of 200.

## XIX

### FOUR TRICK BIDS

One often hears a three trick bid at royal auction spoken of as crossing the danger line and some textbooks warn the player never to go so high unless he is sure of his ground, as these are the contracts on which the big losses are made.

Experience does not carry out this theory, and among good players fewer tricks are usually lost on three and four trick bids than on one or two trick bids, because the good player's calculations are closer when he is forced up to three or four tricks than when he is just bidding a trick or two on general principles.

In watching the play at any first class club one cannot help noticing the number of times that the bidding goes as high as three tricks. It sometimes reaches five tricks, four being not at all uncommon. That these contracts frequently fail cannot be denied, but they fail for just what the declarer thought they would fail and he was prepared to lose that amount when he made the bid. This is not true of the ordinary one or two trick bids, which sometimes go down for astonishing amounts.

"If I can afford to take a chance on an original bid," remarked a crack player, "why should I not take the same chance on the second or third round? I do not know how much I may be set for on any bid I make the first time around, and if I see a chance to keep the

game in by taking a similar risk on the following rounds why not try it?"

But there is one great difference between the two risks. On the first round, when bids are made on the player's own cards, there are two chances, one to win and the other to lose. Bids made on probabilities go just as often largely in your favor as they do against you. A bid to make the odd only may be set back four or five tricks, but a bid of that kind is just as likely to win the game on the deal or make a little slam.

Among good players this is not true of the later rounds of the bids, because the position is gradually narrowed down to one that can be measured as exactly as a city lot. There are countless hands in which there is no chance whatever, probability being eliminated and certainty taking its place.

In such situations any bid to make more than two or three tricks must be based on one of two things, the certainty that it will go through or the willingness of the player to risk the loss of fifty or a hundred points, which seems inevitable. Sifted in among these is an occasional hand in which the element of luck in an unplaced suit may come in, which lends excitement and interest to the game.

Sometimes the chances are combined in the hand of the player. His own bid may be in the balance, success or failure depending on the position of a certain card, so that he is speculating not only on what he can afford to pay for keeping the flag flying but on making good his bid if he has a bit of luck with it. Here is a case of this kind:

♥ Q J 7		
♣ 4		
♦ 10 9 7 4 2		
♠ A K Q J		
♥ K 6 4	Y	♥ 8
♣ K Q J 10 9 3	A      B	♣ 7 6 5
♦ A Q J	Z	♦ K 8 6 5 3
♠ 9		♠ 7 6 4 3
♥ A 10 9 5 3 2		
♣ A 8 2		
♦ .....		
♠ 10 8 5 2		

Z dealt and bid a heart, having a sure trick in that suit and a trick outside. A bid two clubs and Y, with his ability to ruff the clubs on the second round and his big spade suit, supported his partner with two hearts.

B and Z both passed and A went on to three clubs, to which Y promptly responded with three hearts, B and Z passing again. It is now time for A to stop and count up his chances before he bids any further.

It is clear that the only thing Y can have to justify his repeated supporting bids is a big spade suit, because a good player does not assist on mere trump strength. Z had two tricks in his hand at the start, one at least in hearts, so the other must be in clubs or diamonds if Y has all the spades.

Now if the king of diamonds is in Z's hand and can be caught, A can make five of his trumps, three diamonds and the king of hearts, even if his partner has not a trick in his hand. That is three by cards, which he has already bid. Nothing but a miracle could give him another trick, so there is no probability about it.

It is a certainty that if he bids four he cannot carry out the contract.

But the point is that as he knows he cannot lose more than a trick or two if he does bid four, he can well afford to make a declaration for the sake of keeping the game in, because if Y and Z have all the hearts for trumps and all the spades they will go game in a walk. Therefore A bids four clubs.

Y on the other hand is equally sure of his position. He figures to lose only one club trick and hopes his partner can get diamond discards on the high spades, so he bids four hearts without any fear of loss. There is no speculation about his bid. His partner holds either both ace and king of hearts or he has a sure trick in diamonds or clubs.

It would take six tricks in clubs to overcall this, which A refuses to offer, because if he were doubled he would lose 300 points to a certainty and might lose 400 if he failed to catch the king of diamonds, which is more than the saving of a game is worth when it is not the rubber game.

On the play A led the club and Z won the trick with the ace. The beginner would probably have put dummy in with a spade and taken a trump finesse at once, but Z knows better than that. He wins the club trick with the ace and returns the suit at once, letting dummy ruff it. Then he leads a diamond and trumps it himself, so as to lead another club and clear his hand of losing cards.

When dummy led the queen of trumps A refused to win it, having a vague idea that he might make both

his trumps on a ruff, which he should have seen was impossible. Dummy did not lead the spade, but another diamond, which Z trumped, leading the ace and another trump to get the king out of the way. Then he ruffed the next diamond lead and made all the spades, scoring a little slam and four honors, a result that fully justified Y's assisting bids, as he won seven tricks out of the twelve.

Here is a case in which two players ran the bids up to four tricks in order to save the game, neither of them having any prospect of fulfilling his contract, but both of them sure that the loss would be small.

♥ A 3			
♦ 9 5			
◆ A J 4			
♠ A K J 10 9 2			
♥ K 10 9 8 6 4	Y	♥ Q J 5	
♦ 2	A	◆ A Q J 4	
◆ Q 8 6 3 2	B	♦ 7 5	
♠ 5	Z	♠ Q 7 6 3	
♥ 7 2			
♦ K 10 8 7 6 3			
◆ K 10 9			
♠ 8 4			

Z dealt on the rubber game and bid a spade, which A passed, as he had not two sure tricks in his hand and preferred to hold his heart call for the second round after Z is pulled out of the spade. Y declared a royal, and B passed.

Z now declared two clubs to show his partner that he could not support the royal and also to indicate that

clubs was his long suit but was not headed by winning cards, as he did not declare it originally. A also comes out of his shell with two hearts, and Y goes back to the spades with two royals.

B, with his stopper in spades, and at least two stoppers in Z's suit, perhaps three if the lead comes right, and two honors in hearts, supports his partner by calling three hearts, which both Z and A passed.

It is now Y's time to count up his losers. These are first a heart, then at least one club, as his partner cannot have two winning cards in that suit, and probably two diamonds. He must drop the queen of trumps to make three by cards, but he is asked to bid three only to overcall B, which he gladly does. The most he can lose seems to be a trick.

B, in his turn, figures on losing two or three spade tricks unless A can ruff the suit early; at least one club, and one or two diamonds. If he goes four hearts he knows he cannot possibly make it, but he is willing to pay for keeping the flag flying, so he bids four hearts, which Y overcalls with four royals, although Y knows he cannot make it. At this point B dropped out, thinking it a better chance to stop Y from going game than to risk the loss of 300 or 400 points on his own contract.

On the play B led the heart queen and Y won the trick. By putting dummy in with a diamond Y got a finesse in trumps, leading the eight of spades from Z's hand and passing it up. Another trump lead when B let the eight hold, and A discarded a club, B winning the trick with the spade queen.

A won the next heart lead and forced Y with a third round. Then Y picked up both B's trumps and led the club through B, who allowed the king to make. At this point Y saw that he might make good on his contract if he took a diamond finesse and it went through, so he led the ten from dummy and made the jack and ace, losing a club trick at the end, but getting his contract and the game, thanks to his partner's king of diamonds and to B's opening lead.

B could have set the contract and held Y down to the three tricks that Y figured were all he could get, by leading the ace of clubs and then ruffing A with another club, after which B must make the queen of trumps and a heart.

Here is a case in which there is no chance about the player's bid, when he goes up to four tricks, as he knows it is impossible to make it unless the bids are entirely misleading as to the situation confronting him:

♥ K 10 5 3		
♦ Q 10 5		
◆ J 9 8 7		
♠ 9 7		
♥ J 7 6 4 2	Y	♥ A Q 9 8
♦ 6 3	A	♦ K 8 7
◆ A Q 5 3	B	♦ K 10 6
♠ A K	Z	♠ Q 8 2
♥ .....		
♦ A J 9 4 2		
◆ 4 2		
♠ J 10 6 5 4 3		

Z dealt on the rubber game and bid a spade, the suit being too weak in high cards to justify a royal and there being only one trick in the clubs. A doubled to show two stoppers in the spade suit and Y passed, being unable to pull his partner out and glad to have a chance to keep the game in for the price of 100 points. B bid no trumps.

Now Z turns loose with his two royals and A, in order to complete the picture that he is trying to give his partner of his hand, declares three diamonds, knowing that he will not be left with it if his partner really has a no-trumper. Y passed again and B bid three no trumps.

So far the declarations against Z show him that there are two spade tricks in A's hand and at least two winning diamonds against him in the A and B hands combined, because B must have had a sure trick in diamonds when he made his first no trump call. Y having passed twice cannot have more than two possible tricks in his whole hand, so that B stands to lose two spades, two diamonds and at least one club, leaving the total value of his hand at eight tricks.

In spite of this he cheerfully bids four royals, because even if he is doubled it is worth 200 points to save the rubber. B, who is bidding on the certainty of two spade tricks in A's hand, which must be ace king or ace jack ten and the ace and queen of diamonds or ace and jack, shown by A's double and his bid following it, counts his hand as good for three by cards certain and for four or better if the hearts lie right.

When B bids four no trumps Z is still willing to lose 300 to save the rubber and calls five royals, but B goes on to five no trumps in preference to trying for penalties, taking his chance on the lucky lie of the heart suit, which has not been shown at all.

On the play Z led the fourth best club, which B won with the king. B then put A in with a spade and led the seven of hearts, forcing Y to protect himself by covering with the ten. Another spade put A in again to lead the jack of hearts, which caught Y's king whether he put it on the jack or held off for a round or two. This established a heart in A's hand.

All this time Z is shedding everything but the ace jack and small in clubs, hoping for that suit to come again from Y. When B led the queen of spades Y had to discard and he kept a club. When B led a small diamond he put the ace on from dummy and led the established thirteener in hearts, on which Y let go a diamond.

This enabled B to count his hand, as he must still have one club higher than the fourth best led originally by Z, which leaves him with only two diamonds. This inference makes it easy for B to return a small diamond, win it with the king and overtake the ten with the queen in dummy, so as to make a trick with the five at the end.

The play gives B a grand slam on the hand through the very thing he gambled on, which was the lucky distribution of the heart suit. All that Y and Z could have saved was the ace of clubs and a diamond, which

was not enough to keep in the rubber or set the contract.

So far from these four trick bids entailing large risks, experience seems to show that they are less risky than smaller bids, as they are based on accurate information, and among good players the loss facing such a bid is usually known in advance and accepted as worth while under the conditions.

It is the blind bids of a trick or two which are slept on by crafty opponents that go down so heavily. After these opponents have come out into the open and declared the full strength of their hands by bidding on them for two or three rounds there are no traps to be blindly fallen into.

## PART II—THE PLAY

### XX

#### VALUE OF A TRICK IN PLAY

There are persons who will tell you that the bid is everything in auction and that the play of the cards does not amount to a hill of beans. One might as well say that the bid on the new subways was everything and that the carrying out of the contracts in the actual construction was of little or no importance.

As pointed out by Badsworth, a single trick may make or break a contract and make a difference of 52 points on the lowest possible declaration, one spade. That trick might be worth 720 points if the declaration were three no trumps redoubled, on the rubber game, if it is conceded that the difference between losing the rubber and winning it is 500 points.

One can understand the loss of tricks through such carelessness as forgetting that the seven is the best of a suit or through failure to lead to a guarded king instead of away from it, because such errors are apparent to the merest tyro. The subtler plays, such as establishing suits by a double finesse or making re-entries out of small cards, are matters requiring a little deeper insight to appreciate and are hardly expected from the average player, although they should never

be overlooked by one with any pretensions to the first class.

But there are situations which even those who are considered as among the best players do not seem to grasp; certain position plays, designed to pick up a single trick, which are anticipated by inference and the lead arranged for a finesse which is still several tricks away. Those who have trained themselves by the solution of bridge problems are usually quick to see into these positions and profit by them provided they have the skill to read the cards and infer the distribution.

Almost any player realizes the advantage of finessing and knows that it is based on the principle of winning tricks with cards which are not the best held in the suit nor in sequence with them. The typical example is the ace queen in one hand and small cards in the other. Any player holding the ace and queen of a suit with the dummy on his left knows that he is sure of two tricks if dummy has not the king, provided he does not lead that suit himself.

In the same way any ordinary player knows that if dummy has a suit headed by ace, queen, jack, and he leads a small card to it, the jack is the card to play, and that if it holds the trick the declarer should put himself in again so as to lead from the weak hand to the strong once more and finesse the queen, after which the ace ought to drop the king.

But these are what we call ready-made tenaces because they existed when the cards were dealt and there is nothing to do but to play them. It requires careful

observation, which is another name for a good memory, to see that one must lead the trey to the queen and five in order to win two tricks over the ten and four, which are not yet played. These are the tenaces that become established in the course of play, sometimes by accident, sometimes by bad discards.

But there is still another and much more difficult tenace position, and that is one arranged by the player himself in anticipation of a distribution of the cards which he cannot see but simply infers from the drop. When one gets into the class that can work this part of the game he is not likely to let any tricks get away from him through those minor mistakes which are common to the beginner. Take this situation:

♥ A 6 5		
♦ K 5 4		
♦ K Q 10 5 3		
♠ A 5		
♥ K Q 10 9 8 3	Y	♥ 7 4
♣ ..... .	A	♣ Q J 10 8 6 3
♦ J 9 8 4	B	♦ 6
♠ K Q J	Z	♠ 10 8 4 3
♥ J 2		
♦ A 9 7 2		
♦ A 7 2		
♣ 9 7 6 2		

The score was love all on the rubber game, Z having dealt. Without entering into the details of bidding, it is sufficient to say that the winning declaration was three no trumps by Z, doubled by A and redoubled by Z. Y first bid no trumps and therefore played the hand.

On the play B led the seven of hearts and Y let A hold the trick with the eight. A returned the king to prevent the ace and jack from making separately and Y won the trick.

If the hands of Y and Z are now counted up they will be seen to be apparently good for the contract, the game and the rubber: one heart trick, one spade, two clubs and five diamonds. Accordingly Y started right in to make his five diamond tricks, leading a small one to dummy's ace and playing the queen on the return, only to discover that A had the suit stopped and that the contract was bound to fail for two tricks, or 400 points, instead of winning three by cards redoubled, 144 and 250 for the rubber. This is a difference of 800.

"Hard luck, partner," was the only comment made by Z. "I think my redouble was justifiable because if the diamonds fall we go game"; an explanation which was agreed to by both players and spectators.

The mistake was in taking it for granted that three rounds of a five-card suit will clear it, and it is a mistake that one sees every day.

The success of the contract depends on making five trick in diamonds and on nothing else. If the diamonds are divided Y must make three by cards. If they are all in one hand against him, no matter on which side of him, he cannot make his contract no matter how he plays, so that these two cases may be dismissed from consideration, as one cannot be helped and the other needs no help.

The only distribution over which the player has any

control is when there are four to the jack in one hand and a singleton in the other, and that distribution should always be provided for. If the singleton is with A there is no way to get five diamond tricks, because the jack, nine or eight will stop the suit. If the singleton is with B it is easy to get five tricks if Y plays correctly.

The beginner will probably jump to the conclusion that the play should be to lead a small one from Y's hand and finesse the ten on the return. But that would be to give up the whole thing if there were only three to the jack in one hand.

The correct play with this and all similar combinations is to discover, by making two leads, whether or not the cards are divided three and two. This is accomplished by leading the king first from Y's hand and following it with a small card, winning the trick with the ace. If both adversaries follow suit it is all clear sailing, but if A renounces it is all over. If it is B that renounces the position that will win all five tricks has been secured.

The secret in all such situations is to know the chances for and against certain distributions and to play as if the favorable one were the one that you knew to exist, because unless it exists you cannot accomplish anything.

But there is another difficult point not grasped by players who are much above the average in other respects, and that is in placing certain cards in certain hands by inference and arranging a finesse that will not come off until later. Take this case:

♥ Q J 10 9 8 7	
♦ J 9	
◊ 4 3	
♠ A 7 2	
♥ 5 4 3	
♦ Q 9 7 6 5	
♠ 8 5 4 3	
	Y
A	B
	Z
♥ A K	
♦ K 3 2	
◊ A J 8	
♠ K Q J 9 6	
♥ 6 2	
♦ A 10 8 7 6 5 4	
◊ K 10 2	
♠ 10	

The score was 18 all, rubber game. Z dealt. The winning declaration lay with B, who was forced to two no trumps, which all passed.

On the play B just made his contract, and this is how he did it. Z led his fourth best club, the seven, and dummy's queen held the trick, Y playing the nine. A led a spade and Y won the second round, Z discarding a heart. When Y came through with the jack of clubs both B and Z passed it up and Y led a diamond.

This trick B won with the ace and made his four established spades. Then he made his ace and king of hearts and threw the rest of his cards on the table, surrendering the balance of the tricks, but taking the game and rubber.

This hand illustrates another very common mistake, which is the failure to give up cards which might prevent your partner from continuing a suit, a piece of tactics that is the foundation of many a first-class bridge problem.

When Z led the seven of clubs Y should have known, by the application of Foster's eleven rule that the declarer, B, had only one club higher than the seven in his hand. If it is the ace, Y's play does not matter and he may as well throw the nine as the jack. But if B's card is the king, Y blocks his partner's suit by keeping the jack, because Z cannot afford to win that card on the return unless B covers.

Had Y given up the jack of clubs when dummy's queen won the first trick he would have had the nine to lead through, and when B refused to cover Z could have overtaken the nine with the ten and led his ace, making six club tricks, which with the ace of spades would have set the contract for 100 points instead of losing two by cards and the rubber.

Many a rubber is lost by not getting just one more trick when the opportunity offers, the adversaries saving the game and taking the rubber on the next deal or two. In such cases the result is often due to one misplay which costs just one trick. Take this hand:

♥ Q 7 4		
♦ Q 7 3 2		
♦ A K 2		
♠ K 10 2		
♥ K 6		
♦ A K J 9 5 4		
♦ 7 4 3		
♠ 8 5		
	Y	♥ A 10 9 5 3
	A B	♦ 10 6
	Z	♦ 8 6
		♠ J 7 6 3
♥ J 8 2		
♦ 8		
♦ Q J 10 9 5		
♠ A Q 9 4		

The score was love all on the rubber game and Y got the play at two no trumps.

B led the ten of clubs and A put on the king. Seeing he would establish the queen in Y's hand if he went on, and not liking the heart situation he cautiously led a diamond, hoping that after Z had made his diamonds he would have to lead away from his spade tenace or his hearts. Y and Z made the five diamonds at once, leaving Z in the lead, A having discarded a spade and a club, B two hearts and a club.

Now, if Y can make a heart trick, or can get four tricks in spades he wins the game, and he concluded to try for the spades, leading a small one from Z's hand, playing the king and returning the ten, which he covered with the queen, only to find the jack guarded against him.

If he leads the heart he may not make a trick in that suit, so he led the spade ace and another, putting B in, which let A and B make two heart tricks and the best club. This stopped Y and Z at two by cards, and although they fulfilled their contract they finally lost the rubber.

The correct play on the spade suit, especially after the spade discard by A, was to arrange for a possible finesse on the third round by leading the ace first from Z's hand, putting the ten on it, not the deuce. A small spade won by the king would then have disclosed the situation and have left the cards in the right position for leading through B and overtaking the deuce with the nine, catching both jack and seven and just going game.

If the difference between losing and winning the rubber is 500 points this single misplay cost Y 510 points. It would take a lot of bad bidding to lose any more on a hand, yet there are those who insist there is nothing in the play at auction.

## XXI

### UNBLOCKING LONG SUITS

A well known teacher of bridge, on being asked what he considered the most important thing to impress upon the beginner at auction after his system of bidding was settled upon, immediately answered that "the high card from the short hand" would save more tricks than anything else in the game.

The exact meaning of this phrase is that when a suit is distributed between two hands one of them is usually longer in the suit than the other, such as five and three, or even six and two. If there are high cards in each hand the hand which is shorter in the suit should get rid of its high cards first, either by leading them or by playing them on lower cards led from the hand that is long in the suit, or by putting them up second hand if the suit is led through.

One continually sees the beginner making such mistakes as leading a king from a suit of five and playing small from dummy's ace, jack and another. A small card led from the long hand finds the queen second hand and kills it with the ace, but the jack blocks the suit, or the jack finesse holds and the ace drops the queen, but blocks the suit. Had the jack and ace been got rid of first from the short hand and the king allowed to win the third round the suit would have been all cleared up and made.

The foundation upon which this rule of playing the high card from the short hand is based is the necessity for unblocking suits in which there is a chance to win tricks with the small cards. Dr. Pole laid down the axiom many years ago that the aim of every player in all varieties of the whist family of games was to make tricks with the small cards, as the big ones would take care of themselves. It is very seldom that more than half the high cards in the pack, the aces, kings and queens, will take tricks, so often are they trumped or thrown away on deuces and treys of other suits.

A number of exhaustive calculations and tabulations were gone into to discover the number of tricks that fell to the trumps on an average in the old game of whist, but no one seems to have taken the trouble to do the same thing for bridge or auction. It would seem only fair to assume that the number of tricks falling to the trump suit must be much larger in auction than in whist on account of the deliberate selection of a trump suit that is not only strong but long in one particular hand instead of leaving such a matter to the chance of the turn-up at the end of the deal.

But bridge and auction have introduced an element that was entirely absent from whist, the no-trumper, in which no tricks fall to the trumps and each suit is free to do its best. The calculations of Dr. Pole and others as to the possibilities of making tricks with the small cards are therefore entirely useless as a guide because those figures are all based on a game in which there were only a small number of tricks to be won in plain suits in each hand. The great thing in whist was not

unblocking but getting out of the way of the trump suit.

Unblocking is much more important in a no-trumper than in a trump declaration, but as the declarer can usually turn the end of a hand into a no-trumper by exhausting the adverse trumps unblocking may be useful to him in either make, but it is never so important or so frequently necessary as getting rid of losing cards or making losing trumps.

With those opposed to the declaration unblocking is confined almost exclusively to the no-trumpers, as they seldom get any chance to bring in the small cards of a long suit against the declarer's trump strength. If they do, their success is not due to any unblocking tactics, but to having broken down the strong trump hand by repeated forcing.

While the simple maxim "High card from the short hand" covers the whole situation the various complications in the situations to which the rule should be applied require separate study and analysis.

In order to apply the rule intelligently a player must first be thoroughly familiar with the conventional leads of high cards and should be able to apply Foster's eleven rule to all leads of the fourth-best. The lead of an ace, for instance, against a no trump declaration shows one of two things always and invariably, ace, queen, jack or seven cards in the suit. In either case it is a request for the partner to give up the king if he holds it with only one small card. This is almost a command to play the high card from the hand that is

short in the suit, so as to avoid blocking the hand that is long.

The lead of a queen may have two meanings at no trump. It either denies any higher card in the suit and is a request for the third hand to get out of the way if he holds either ace or king or both, unless the king is in the dummy and can be caught. A player holding ace, king and deuce should put the king on his partner's queen, so as to comply with the rule and play the high card from the short hand.

The queen is sometimes led from ace, queen, jack and others, less than seven in suit, when there is no re-entry in the hand. The object is to get the king out of the way at once. If the partner has it he should give it up unless he has two small with it. If the adversary has it it is forced and the partner of the leader is probably left with a card of the suit to return later, if he gets in.

The old rule about returning the higher of only two cards and the lowest of three when you are unable to lead the best or one of the second and third best of your partner's suit is only another variation of this rule requiring the play of the high cards when short in the suit.

The lead of one of the second and third best in order to force out the best and leave you in command of the suit is another variation of the same principle, but many players do not realize the importance of giving up the best of a suit when it is their partner that leads one of the two equals. Most of the tricks that

are lost in this position are when the suit has simmered down to the eights and nines.

One of the most important applications of this unblocking rule is known as the Foster echo, which was invented for the purpose of combining unblocking tactics with information that could be used by the leader. It not only gets out of the partner's way but tells him what is in his way.

This echo consists in playing the second best of the suit your partner leads when you make no attempt to win the trick, no matter how many you hold or what they are. When the third hand can be depended on to follow this simple rule the original leader can frequently pick up a trick or two that would otherwise have escaped him, simply because he has a clearer view of the unblocking situation. Take this case:

♥ K				
♦ A K 8 6 5 3				
◆ 8 3				
♠ Q 9 5 4				
♥ A J 6 5 4				
♦ 10 4				
◆ K 7 4				
♠ J 8 6				
	Y		♥ Q 7 2	
	A	B	♦ Q J 7 2	
	Z		◆ Q 9 5	
			♠ K 7 2	
♥ 10 9 8 3				
♦ 9				
◆ A J 10 6 2				
♠ A 10 3				

Z dealt and finally got the play on a bid of two no trumps.

A led his fourth best heart and dummy's king held the trick, B playing the seven, which is his second best. Z saw that it was useless to try for dummy's clubs as Y had no re-entry, and in order to go game he must make four tricks in diamonds by taking a successful ace jack ten finesse, so he led the diamond from Y's hand and A won the ten with the king.

Nine players out of ten would probably have led the ace and another heart at once, but if A does this Z will make a trick in hearts, or B will block the suit with the queen. If B gives up the queen on the ace, the ten in Z's hand wins the game.

A figured that as B's seven played to the first trick must be his second best B can have only one higher and that card must be one of four: queen, ten, nine or eight. Whichever it is, the remaining three are with Z. The evidence of the echo with the second best is absolutely unequivocal in all such cases.

No matter which of these four cards it is that B holds Z has the suit stopped or B will block it if A plays the ace, so A leads the four. The queen wins, the deuce is returned and A B make four heart tricks, which just saves the game.

Many good players echo with the queen in the third hand in order to show the partner to go on, the rule being to play the seven and then the deuce to show the queen. But this is useless as an unblocking play, as the echo does not show number and a player holding Q 10 7 2 would play the 7 on the first round and so would a player holding Q 7 alone. In the foregoing hand if B plays the seven and then the deuce A can-

not read the situation and B has not unblocked. In the Foster echo the player who gives up his second best always keeps his smallest card to the last, which calls for the play of the queen on the second round, keeping the deuce.

If B had not been a player who could be depended on for his second best regardless of number A would have led the ace and another heart upon getting in with the diamond, and B would have probably led a spade, which would have gone to dummy's queen and won the game for Y and Z. Not only that, but as the second finesse in diamonds would have held B would have been brought down to unguarding his king of spades or his clubs on the long diamonds, which would give Y and Z four by cards.

This play of the second best regardless of number or value sometimes comes into action long after the first trick, as it is not confined to the opening lead, but to any play on the partner's suits. Take this case:

♥ 10 9 6 5 4			
♦ 9 7			
♦ 9 5			
♠ A Q 8 2			
♥ 8 7			
♦ K Q 10 8 6 4 3			
♦ 8 7 3 2			
♠ ..... .			
	Y	Q	J 3
A	B	♦ A	
Z		♦ A Q J 10 4	
		♦ K 6 5 3	
♥ A K 2			
♦ J 5 2			
♦ K 6			
♠ J 10 9 7 4			

Z plays the hand as a two no trump, doubled by B.

A started with the eight of clubs. B, unable to return his partner's suit and with the king of spades now a certainty for a trick, started his own suit, playing ace and then queen of diamonds.

Upon these diamonds A played the seven first, which was his second best, and then the trey, which was still his second best, keeping the smallest card.

Z saw that unless the king of spades lay right for him he could not make his contract, but if the king was with A he could just get two by cards, so he led the jack, losing the trick to B's king, A discarding a heart. B rushed off his three winning diamonds, and then led a heart, setting the contract for 100 points, which is just what he calculated on when he doubled.

Had B stopped to consider the cards played by his partner he could have set the contract for 700 instead of for 100. When B led the ace of diamonds and A played the seven that card showed a still better diamond in A's hand, as he dropped to the trey next time, for with trey and seven alone the trey would come first, as it would then be the second best. Now, the only diamond A could hold higher than the seven would be the eight, and when B got in with the king of spades he should have led the four of diamonds, which would have put A in and allowed him to make all his clubs, after which A would have returned the diamond and B would have made the last trick, scoring a little slam against a contract to make two by cards.

The chief fault with the majority of players is the failure to look far enough ahead and to provide for

every possible distribution of the cards, no matter how improbable, because, as the French say, it is the improbable that always happens.

Another common fault is getting an idea into the head in playing the hand and overlooking something much more important, the oversight resulting in a blocked suit when it might easily have been avoided. Take this case:

♥ Q 6		
♦ J 9 8 7 5 3		
◊ 7 5 2		
♠ 7 4		
♥ K 10 9 8 4	Y	♥ J 7 5
♦ 4 2	A	♦ K 6
◊ 9 8 6	B	◊ Q J 10
♠ A Q 9	Z	♠ J 10 8 5 2
♥ A 3 2		
♦ A Q 10		
◊ A K 4 3		
♠ K 6 3		

Z dealt and bid one no trump. A called two in hearts, Y and B passed and Z went two no trumps, which all passed. A led the eight of hearts and Y put on the queen second hand, which is always the correct play when it is only once guarded and the ten is not with the ace in the fourth hand. B started the usual no trump echo with the seven of hearts, his second best.

Z correctly picked the club suit as the longest between the two hands and led a small one from Y's cards. B played the six. With the jack in the dummy

Z saw that his ten was just as good as the queen and carelessly finessed it. When the ten held he led the ace and caught the king, but his own queen blocked dummy's suit.

Z made a trick with the queen, and then dummy having no re-entry he turned his attention to the diamonds, hoping to clear them in two leads, as A had just discarded one. Failing in this, instead of going on and clearing the diamonds by getting the queen out of the way, he led the ace and small heart, so as to put A in and get his king of spades led up to, which he thought very clever, as the spade trick would just give him his contract.

But B was a very shrewd player and saw through the scheme, so he played the five of hearts on the ace, completing the echo begun on the first trick and showing some card higher than the seven still in his hand. A saw this must be the jack, so he passed up the heart in order to let B make his diamond trick. B made it, and then he led the spade, so that they set the contract for 50 points.

The finesse of the club ten cost Z the game. In order to unblock the suit, whether he caught the king or not, he should have played the queen on the first round. If the finesse lost the suit is unblocked. If the king does not fall to the ace the ten gets it out of the way and unblocks the suit at the same time.

Let the cards lie how they may, the unblocking play cannot lose. As soon as the ace dropped the king, as it would have in this case, all Z had to do was to lead the ten, overtake it with the jack and run off all the

clubs in Y's hand. After that he can make sure of the game with the ace and king of diamonds.

Just look how this would have put A in a hole. Z can afford to discard two small diamonds and one spade on dummy's clubs, while B gets down to a diamond, two spades and a heart. As for A, he is either down to two hearts and two spades or he has discarded the spade queen and kept three hearts. If he has blanked his ace of spades Z leads a small spade, otherwise he puts A in with a heart. In either case he wins five by cards instead of losing his contract.

One continually sees players who are otherwise above average slipping up on what might be called anticipatory unblocking plays. Here is an example:

♥ Q J 10 8 5 4 2	
♦ .....	
◆ 10 2	
♠ A K J 9	
♥ 7	Y
♦ K J 4 3	A      B
◆ K J 8 7 3	Z
♠ Q 6 4	
♥ A K	♥ 9 6 3
♦ A Q 8 7 6 5 2	♦ 10 9
◆ A Q 6 5	◆ 9 4
♠ .....	◆ 10 8 7 5 3 2

Z dealt and bid no trump. Y overcalled with two hearts, which he thought the safer game, but Z went back to the no-trumper. A led the seven of diamonds, which Z let come round to his queen. He then unblocked the hearts by playing the ace and king, A dis-

carding a club, and then set his wits to work to make the adversaries lead a spade so that dummy should get in. Instead of trying to clear his clubs he led a small diamond.

A played the jack to shut out the ten, and finding his king and eight were equals he led one and put Z right in again on the same suit. Z in his turn put A in, and after A had made his two diamond tricks he led a small club, as B was steadily discarding spades. Z let B hold the trick with the nine, and when B led the ten Z let that win also, knowing that he must win every other trick, no matter what B did next. This gave him his contract, but not the game.

Had Z looked ahead a little bit before playing to the first trick he would have seen that the only possible way to make the heart suit was to unblock it by discarding his own ace and king on dummy's ace and king of spades, and the only chance to do this was to hold the first diamond trick with dummy's ten, which is of no use and might as well be sacrificed in the attempt to win the game.

The moment the ten of diamonds holds Y can lead two winning spades, getting rid of the two blocking hearts.

Once more the effect on A's hand is seen. As in the hand first given, he is in a hole. He must keep the queen of spades while dummy is in the lead or dummy will make the jack after he is through with the hearts. Which king shall A unguard? This is one of the positions that go to make up bridge problems.

While Y still has two hearts to play, A has five cards

left, the king jack of two suits and the queen of spades. When the last heart comes along Z is down to the ace and queen in two suits and whichever jack A has discarded on the trick before Z will keep the queen of that suit, making a grand slam in spite of anything A can do, instead of stopping at two by cards.

In the first hand given A and B clearly outplayed Z. In the second hand they are helpless if Y put on the ten of diamonds second hand. Here is an excellent example of how carefully the forces of each side may be managed when one is as skilful as the other and the adversaries see that the declarer has an unblocking scheme under way.

## XXII

### ELIMINATION—A PROCESS THAT SAVES THE PLAYER MANY TRICKS

There are many games in which a player is required to undertake the winning of a stated number of tricks, but in the better class, such as boston and solo whist, the general practice is to underbid the hand rather than to overcall it, and many of the declarations in those games are conceded without opposition, which is something unheard of in auction. The tendency in auction seems to be load the call to the limit most of the time, so that the declarer is always working hard to fulfil his contract.

Unless the stated number of tricks is won the play goes for nothing unless it is a defensive call, made to prevent a greater loss; but in any case the secret of success lies in getting all there is out of the hands, so that one of the first things that must be mastered by any one who hopes to become an expert at the game in playing the declarer's position is to count up the tricks that he is sure of as soon as dummy's cards are laid down and to discover exactly where the extra tricks that are necessary to fulfil the contract or to win the game are to be picked up, if at all. That settled, the rest of the hand can be forgotten.

This process is technically known as elimination, and once mastered it will save a person at least three tricks on the average in every rubber, to say nothing of the

relief to the mental strain. It is so called because it eliminates from the attention everything that is not essential to the success of the declaration and leaves the mind free to concentrate upon the one suit in which tricks are to be won or lost.

This process of elimination is particularly useful as a corrective for those who are in the habit of trying first one thing and then another, without any definite plan of action for the hand as a whole. It would be impossible to find a hand to which the process of elimination would not apply, and sometimes it reduces the whole play to such simple terms that it might be said a child could get all there was in the cards. Take this as an example of elimination in its simplest form:

♥ Q J 3 2		
♠ A 7 4 3		
♦ A Q 10		
♣ 4 3		
♥ 10 9 7 5	Y	♥ A K 8 6
♠ K Q J 9 5 2	A B	♣ .....
♦ 2	Z	♦ K J 9 8 5 4 3
♣ Q 9		♣ K 6
♥ 4		
♠ 10 8 6		
♦ 7 6		
♣ A J 10 8 7 5 2		

Z dealt. The bidding was open to criticism, but finally Y went three no trumps, and when all passed B led the eight of diamonds, which Y won with the ten.

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Upon counting up the possibilities before him Y sees that there is nothing to be made in hearts if he plays that suit, although he might make a trick or two in it if his adversaries led it, so he eliminates the heart suit from his mind entirely. If they play hearts, well and good, but Y never will.

In clubs there is no possibility of making more than one trick, and Y will not give up the ace of that suit until he is forced to, so he can eliminate the clubs as well as the hearts. In diamonds his game is to wait for B to lead the suit again or for A to lead it through him, as Y cannot afford to give up the tenace, so diamonds are also eliminated, leaving nothing to think about but spades.

In the spade suit it is possible to make six tricks if the king and queen are split, no matter how they lie or how many guards either of those cards may have. These six tricks with two diamonds and the ace of clubs fulfil the contract and win the game.

There is therefore nothing in the hand to think about except to lead the spade and finesse the ten, letting the adversaries do what they please about the other suits.

A having no diamond to return, led the king of clubs and with seven of the suit between the two hands, Y put his ace right on for fear A would shift to hearts, in which suit B started a reverse discard with the eight.

Another spade brought down the king and on the five established cards in Z's hand B completed his echo in hearts and discarded all his diamonds but the king and jack. Z led the heart, putting B in, and Y made two diamond tricks, four by cards.

Occasionally the process of elimination leads a good player to leave suits alone which would be the very first that the beginner would attack. Here is a very instructive case that illustrates what is meant:

♥ A 10 8		
♦ Q 6 5		
◆ A Q J 4		
♠ 6 3 2		
	Y	♥ Q J 9 4 3
♥ K 2	A	♦ J
♦ A K 10 9 8 7 3	B	♦ 10 9 5
◆ K 9 3	Z	♠ J 8 7 4
♠ 5		
♥ 7 6 5		
♦ 4 2		
◆ 7 6 2		
♠ A K Q 10 9		

This hand was played under the old system of scoring, Y getting the play at two no trumps.

B led the jack of clubs to his partner's declared suit and dummy's cards went down. Now, the proper time for the declarer to eliminate is before he plays to the first trick, because the inferences then made are the key to the hand.

A beginner would probably count up the combined hands as good for five spade tricks, two aces and a club trick. That fulfils the contract, but does not go game, the only chance for that third trick being apparently an extra diamond.

But these eight tricks are not certain by any means. The queen of clubs must make or A will never clear his suit. The two aces are certain, and three of the

spades. Any trick in hearts but the ace is impossible. Any trick in clubs but the queen is also impossible.

This enables the declarer to eliminate at once any thought about two suits, hearts and clubs. He can also dismiss the spade suit from his mind, as that will play itself any time he leads it. This concentrates his whole attention on getting two tricks in diamonds, so as to go game. There is nothing else to think about, something may turn up later, but that is all for the start, two tricks in diamonds.

A won the first round of clubs with the king and led the ace, B discarding a diamond. A led a third round of clubs, which made it look as if he had a good chance to get in again, or he would have switched to his partner's hearts, which had been bid.

Y now sees his way clear to that extra diamond trick. By putting Z in with a spade and leading the diamonds from that hand he lies over A. If B has the king it does not matter, as B cannot get A into the lead again while Y has the best heart.

The beginner would never play the hand this way, but would try to run off five spade tricks, hoping to force discards and lead to the diamond tenace after the spades were all made.

As soon as the jack of diamonds holds Y plays for a second finesse in the same suit by putting Z in again with another spade, and this trick shows that B had the spade suit stopped with four to the jack. After making four tricks in diamonds Y leads a third spade through to Z, takes the finesse and makes every card in that suit with the ace of hearts, five by cards.

As an illustration of how a change in the adversaries' attack would shift the point of attention for the declarer, suppose that A had abandoned his clubs after making ace and king and had led a heart, the king. Y would have put the ace on the second round and have eliminated the diamond suit from consideration, as it would be too risky to take that finesse while B held three stiff hearts.

Two rounds of spades would have shown that A was out, and by putting himself in with the ace of diamonds Y could have made sure of the club and five spade tricks. A diamond from Z's hand would then be safe, the contract and the game being secure.

The diamond finesse in this variation would risk the loss of 100 points, as A has already won three tricks with clubs and hearts and B has three hearts that are good. The hope would be of course that the spades would drop. Should A turn out to be the player that had the spades stopped he could not have a diamond in his hand, so that Z could not win, no matter what he did.

In the trump declarations this process of elimination is usually much simpler, because the tricks that can be counted on are more secure, nothing being able to take away from a player the tricks to be won with the high trumps. Here is a good example of elimination in a trump-declaring hand:

♥ 10 5		
♦ A Q 3		
♦ 9 7 4		
♠ J 10 7 3 2		
♥ 9 8		Y
♦ K 8 7 2		A B
♦ K Q 10 5 3		Z
♠ 9 6		
♥ A Q J 6 4 2		
♦ 9 6 4		
♦ A J 6		
♠ 5		

Z dealt and gets the play on a bid of three hearts, A leading the king of diamonds.

When Z counts up the combined hands for the certain tricks, he finds five in trumps, no matter where the king lies, one in clubs and one in diamonds, but that is all. This is two short of his contract and he has to determine before he plays to the first trick what he will concentrate his attention upon so as to get those extra tricks.

The first opportunity that presents itself is to pass the king of diamonds, so that if A continues the suit both jack and ace will make tricks for Z provided B does not ruff the second round. The next thing that suggests itself is the possibility of catching the king of trumps if it is in B's hand, which would pick up a trick. Still another chance is a club finesse. If two of these finesse go right the contract is safe; Z wins the game, provided he gets the two tricks in diamonds for a starter.

A did go on with the diamond and the jack won.

The club finesse held, the trump came through and caught the king and Z went game on the hand.

This was a simple, clearcut proposition in elimination. Nothing doing in spades, finesses in two suits and a Bath coup in the adversaries' suit.

There are occasional hands in which there is nothing to play for apparently, in which case the thing to eliminate is the suits that you would have to lead from at a disadvantage and to give away tricks in some other suit, so as to let the adversaries develop the hand for you. Strange as it may seem, they will always do this if you will only give them a chance by leading a suit in which they must win all the tricks anyway.

The result of these tactics usually is that the adversaries are induced to shift round and try first one thing and then another, and toward the end of the hand you will find that they have made several cards of yours good for tricks which were not worth anything at the start and which you could not have promoted yourself, no matter how you managed things. If any one makes a mistake and loses a trick in these hands it will not be the declarer. Take this case:

♥ 10 6 4 2		
♣ 8 2		
♦ J 8 2		
♠ Q 10 4 2		
♥ Q J	Y	♥ K 8 7 5
♣ A K 7 5 4	A B	♣ J
♦ K 9 7 4 3		♦ A 10 5
♠ 7	Z	♠ K J 8 5 3
♥ A 9 3		
♣ Q 10 9 6 3		
♦ Q 6		
♠ A 9 6		

The dealer, Z, was one of those that believe in light no-trumpers, so he made that declaration immediately, and all passed. A led his fourth best club and dummy's cards went down.

All the tricks that Z could count upon as certain between the two hands were two aces, and he had undertaken to make seven. Where were the remaining five tricks to come from? The first was won with the queen of clubs, marking both ace and king in A's hand, but this leaves Z still four tricks shy with the lead.

The process with all such hands is to eliminate the suits that will lose tricks if led. This disposes of the diamond, as it is well known that queen in one hand, jack in the other, either twice guarded, will stop the suit provided you do not lead it and do not play a high card second hand.

The next suit to eliminate is the spade, as it is a guess where the king lies, and you stand a better

chance to make two tricks if they lead the suit for you. Then you eliminate the clubs because if Z leads them A will hold off and get a tenace. If Z lets A lead clubs two of Z's cards will be good for two tricks.

Having eliminated everything but the hearts it is clear that there is nothing much to lose or gain by leading them, as the adversaries have the king, queen and jack between them, so that is the best play. Z led a small heart and A came out with the king of clubs. Finding he would establish the ten and nine he led a spade to his partner's discard of the eight. Y played small and Z let the jack hold the trick, which made A think B had the ace and king.

B led a small heart through and Z put on the ace, so as to lead one of the second and third best clubs, the fall of the hearts giving him the same thing in that suit. A did not win the club ten, so Z led a heart, on which A started a reverse in diamonds. B led the ace and five of diamonds and then A made a mistake. Instead of setting the contract for one trick by making his club while he was in he thought he could make it two by putting Y in with the diamond and letting B make two spades, instead of which Y and Z made two spades after the diamond and heart tricks.

In addition to the two tricks that were in sight when dummy's cards were laid down Z makes three tens, a jack and a queen and shuts out an ace, king, queen, jack and ten in the hands of the adversaries, distributed among four suits.

This result, as in all such hands, is due simply to eliminating the suits that are bad ones to lead away from.

## XXIII

### FALSE CARDING

The old discussion as to whether it is better to inform your partner or deceive your adversary in playing your hand cannot apply to the declarer at auction, because he has no partner, and the general impression among those who have studied the subject seems to be that he should play all the false cards he can, provided they are false and not merely irregular, which makes a great difference.

The idea is that while the adversaries are signalling up their hands to each other by means of various well established conventions in the way of leads, returns and echoes, the declarer should do his best to render these messages ambiguous by sending wireless words across the line of communication.

When this can be done understandingly and effectively it is usually the work of an expert, but the average player has no idea of the correct definition of a false card and imagines anything to be false that is unconventional, whether it is calculated to deceive or not. Here is a classical example of correct false carding which the beginner would do well to study, as it forms an effective contract to the examples of alleged false cards that are to follow:

♥ 2		
♣ 10 8 6 2		
♦ Q J 10 6 5 4		
♠ K 6		
♥ 8 7 5 4 3	Y	♥ A K
♣ Q J 9	A	♣ A K 4 3
♦ 9 8 3	B	♦ A 7 2
♠ 10 3	Z	♠ J 8 7 2
♥ Q J 10 9 6		
♣ 7 5		
♦ K		
♠ A Q 9 5 4		

B won the declaration at two no trumps, which Z doubled.

Z led the king of diamonds, the suit his partner had named, and B let it win. Z then led his fourth best spade, as he knew by his partner's bid that Y could have nothing in hearts and that his getting in on that suit was hopeless.

When B counted up his sure tricks he found that there were just seven in sight in hearts, diamonds and clubs and not one more possible under any circumstances, as a fourth heart trick was out of the question against Z's original call. The only chance for an extra trick is in spades, and the only way to get it is to induce the adversaries to lead that suit three times.

Y won the spade trick with the king, which took out his only re-entry and made it useless to go on with his diamonds, so he returned the six of spades. On the first trick B played the seven and on the next he played the eight.

When Z won the second round with the queen it looked as if the spades were established, as he read his partner for king, six, deuce originally, and credited him with returning the higher of two, so that the ace would drop the deuce and jack, making the nine and four good. Instead of this the jack was made good for a trick in B's hand, winning the contract and the game.

Let B play the deuce of spades to the first round and Z stops at the second round, leading a heart, and the contract is set no matter how B plays.

Many of the alleged false cards played by the beginner are calculated to inform rather than to deceive, because, paradoxical as it may seem, there are some false cards which betray the very thing the player is trying to conceal.

The most common example is the habit so many players have of winning a trick with the ace when they hold both ace and king. Some do this so persistently that it is a safe bet they do not hold the ace when they play the king; but the astonishing part of it is that they pay no attention to the circumstances under which they false card the ace and therefore fail to see that in many cases it defeats the very end they have in view.

To play the ace when holding the king sometimes gives the adversaries information which enables them to defeat a contract or save a game which they would otherwise have lost heavily on. Take this case:

♥ K 9 8 6 3 2	
♣ 8 3	
♦ 9 8	
♠ 9 8 4	
♥ Q 7	Y
♣ 9 2	A B
♦ Q J 10 6 5 4	Z
♠ A J 5	
♥ A J	♥ 10 5 4
♣ A Q J 10 5 4	♣ K 7 6
♦ A K 3	♦ 7 2
♠ K 2	♠ Q 10 7 6 3

Z dealt and called no trumps. A bid two diamonds and Y two hearts, which B passed. Z went two no trumps and all passed, A leading the queen of diamonds.

It is a well established convention that in playing against a no-trumper the lead of a queen may be either of two things. It may be from queen jack ten and others or it may be from ace queen jack and others, without a re-entry in the hand, because it is then important to get the king out of the way at once and leave the partner a card to return. This interior lead, as it is called, is often very effective.

Z won the trick with the ace, simply because he had the habit of false carding that way, overlooking the fact that this tells B that A cannot be leading from ace queen jack, and cannot have the king either, as he would lead the king if he held both king and queen.

Z, who was otherwise a very good player, saw there was nothing in the hands but the club finesse, so he led ace and jack of hearts, putting dummy in, and

came through with a club. Failing to drop the king in two rounds and being unable to get dummy in again he went on with a third club, thinking B would return his partner's suit, in which Z had, as he thought, concealed the king.

This is just what B did not do. Apart from A's discard of a diamond the false card on the first trick had told B that Z had the king of diamonds to bring in the clubs with, so B made his ten of hearts and then led a small spade, making five tricks in that suit and setting the contract for 100 points.

Let Z play the king on the first trick and B would feel compelled to return the diamond on the chance that A had led from ace queen jack, and Z would have just gone game and rubber, so that the false card on the first trick cost Z about 400 points.

A sharp adversary will sometimes take a desperate chance when he gets a line on the situation in this way. Here is a case given by Badsworth:

♥ A K 9			
♦ 10 4 3			
◆ J 9 8 5			
♠ 8 5 4			
.	.	.	.
♥ 4 3 2	Y	♥ Q J 10 8 7 6 5	
♦ A Q	A	♦ 8 6 2	
◆ Q 10 6 3 2	B	◆ 7	
♠ J 9 7	Z	♠ 3 2	
♥ .....			
♦ K J 9 7 5			
◆ A K 4			
♠ A K Q 10 6			

The score was love all, rubber game. The bidding was unusual, but ended with Y playing the hand on his declaration of three no trumps, doubled by A.

B led the queen of hearts and Z discarded the small diamond. Y made the same old play, false carding the ace and betraying the position of the king.

A sees at a glance that Y has his contract, the game and the rubber in hand. Five spades, two diamonds in dummy and two hearts marked in Y's hand. Y also saw it but thought it worth while to try for an extra trick or two in clubs, as they were now worth 70 points apiece to him, so he led the ten and passed it up.

A won the trick with the ace, not the queen.

A return of the heart brought the king from Y and also a smile, as he could now see a sure finesse in clubs, making three more tricks in that suit. This meant a small slam at 24 a trick and 200 in penalties.

The finesse of the club nine fell to A's queen and a third heart from A made five tricks in B's hand, setting the contract for 300 points. The reader can judge for himself which was the better of the two false cards, Y's on the hearts or A's on the clubs.

Another error in false carding which is very common is in discarding intermediate cards in order to lead the adversaries to believe that you have none smaller in that suit. From queen and deuce a sharp player will sometimes discard the queen and make the deuce at the end. In any case the object is to make the other side miscount your hand.

But if your adversaries belong to the class that can count hands at all they can count the spots on your

discard as well. This is the way hands are counted by crack players. Here is an illustrating case:

♥ 7 5 3		
♦ Q 6		
♦ K Q J 10 8		
♦ J 4 3		
♥ 9 8	Y	♥ A K 10 2
♦ 5 4 2	A B	♦ A 9 3
♦ 9 6 4 3		♦ A 7 2
♦ A Q 9 2	Z	♦ K 10 6
♥ Q J 6 4		
♦ K J 10 8 7		
♦ 5		
♦ 8 7 5		

B plays the hand on a bid of one no trumps. Z led the diamond to his partner's declared suit so as to get the club through B. Y played the eight and B held off so as to exhaust Z. Y led the king, and the ace being still held up he saw it was useless to go on with no re-entry, so he led the club queen and B put on the ace.

All that B can see in the hand is four spade tricks, one diamond and two hearts. These with the club trick in hand make him two by cards. Nothing but a third trick in hearts will give him the game.

B made his four spade tricks, and on the last round he discarded the ten of hearts to make it look as if he had only two higher, which would mark him with three more clubs.

But Z could count cards just as well as he could count hands, and as Y discarded the trey of hearts and

dummy has not the deuce, Z reads the situation this way: Y having won the first trick with the eight of diamonds and the nine being in the dummy, Y must have held K Q J 10 8, therefore B has only the ace left. Y cannot have a winning heart, or he would have gone on and established his diamonds.

Now if B has the deuce of hearts, which is marked in his hand by his false discard of the ten, he has only two clubs, so Z keeps all his hearts and B just fails in his scheme to go game by coaxing heart discards.

Another stunt that is a great favorite with the beginner is startling his adversaries by winning tricks with very small cards when he has the intermediates in the concealed hand. While this is not false carding in the strictest sense of the word, it is false leading and the idea is to deceive and mislead, whereas the result is precisely opposite if the adversaries are good players. Here is a practical demonstration of the folly of this play:

♥ J 10 3		
♦ J 4		
♦ Q 10 7		
♠ J 10 9 7 5		
♥ 8 7 2	Y	♥ A K 6 4
♠ K Q 10 8 7 3	A	♦ 6 2
♦ 6	B	♦ A 4 3
♣ Q 6 2	Z	♣ A 8 4 3
♥ Q 9 5		
♦ A 9 5		
♦ K J 9 8 5 2		
♣ K		

At the score of love all, Z bid no trumps and all

passed. A led the king of clubs and followed with the queen to prevent the jack and ace from making separately, Z holding off for both rounds. The third round of clubs put Z in. Now comes the smart play that lost the game.

Z led the deuce of diamonds and played the seven from dummy, which forced the ace from B and made Z smile at his own cleverness.

B was a shrewd player and he also smiled, because he could count Z's hand for the K J 9 8 and 5 of diamonds, no clubs, and four unknown cards. To uncover these four cards B led two rounds of hearts, king and ace, on which A echoed with the seven and eight, marking him with the deuce alone and showing that Z held the queen alone. The Foster echo in this case accounts for three of Z's unknown cards.

Then Z has only one spade.

No matter what spade it is, let it be either king or queen, it must leave A with the best spade, as Y has nothing higher than the jack, so B leads the ace of spades, puts A in with another spade and A makes all the rest of his clubs, leaving Z with only three tricks on a contract to make seven. This is entirely due to Z's smartness in putting the seven of diamonds on the first round of that suit instead of the queen.

Unless a false card is played with a definite object in view and one that is likely to succeed in picking up a trick or two it is likely to do more harm than good against watchful adversaries. You cannot mislead players who do not pay any attention to the fall of the cards, so false cards are absolutely useless against them.

## XXIV

### A-J-10 FINESSE

Among the first things that the auction player learns is the possibility of winning tricks with cards which are not the best of the suit nor in sequence with them, and such is the attraction of successful finessing that some persons declare they would not care for the game if this element were taken from it. The opportunities made evident for the finesse are the secret charm of the open hand that makes every one like to play the dummy.

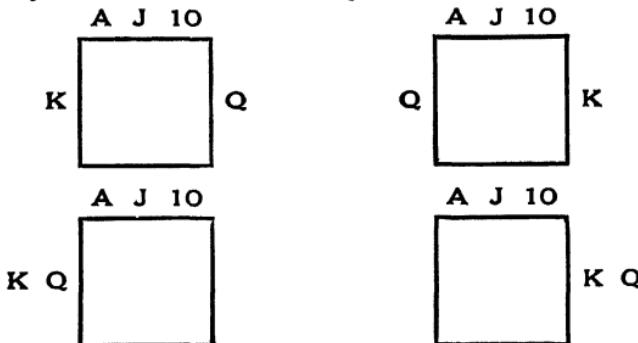
The finesse that every player learns very early in his career is the ace queen, which is the simplest of all, being against only one conspicuous card, the king. The finesse that some players never learn is that against two cards, both king and queen.

In the ace queen finesse there are only two possible positions for the king, in one of which it must make if the queen is put on third hand, and in the other of which the queen must be good for a trick. It is an even thing that the finesse wins or loses and it is up to the player whether to risk it or not. Some will tell you never to take a finesse that is not necessary to accomplish some definite object, such as winning the game.

The A-J-10 finesse is quite a different proposition, as it must be taken if anything is to be made of the suit. There are four possible positions of the king and queen and they are not equally probable by any means, so

that it is not an even thing to win or lose a trick by taking the finesse. If the holder of the A-J-10 knows how to manage his cards he can not only make the odds largely in favor of the finesse, but it can be demonstrated that he must lose if he does not take it, which looks as if the odds in its favor amounted to a certainty.

In order to make this clear let us look at the four possible distributions of the two cards that are against the player who holds the A-J-10.



A moment's inspection of this diagram will show that it does not matter in which hand the A-J-10 is held, because that would simply make the position on the left take the place of the one on the right. Whether the declarer or the dummy holds the cards does not matter, as the play is the same.

The problem is to prevent both king and queen from winning tricks, which means that you shall get two tricks out of your three cards. It is clearly impossible to prevent one or the other from making unless there are no small cards with them, but the thing is to prevent both of them from winning. This can be done

in every case but the fourth position shown in the diagram. If there is a small card with the king and queen they must both take tricks, and the jack and ten must both lose tricks if they are played second or third hand, just as the king must win and the queen must lose in the regular ace queen finesse if the king is on the left of the ace and queen.

The odds against both king and queen being to the left as shown in the fourth position in the diagram are  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to 1. There are  $39 \times 38 = 1482$  ways for the two cards to lie, and there are  $13 \times 12 = 156$  of these ways that will place them both on the left of the A-J-10. This gives us the fraction of probability

$$\frac{156}{1482} = \frac{6}{57} = \frac{1}{9\frac{1}{2}}, \text{ which is } 8\frac{1}{2} \text{ to 1.}$$

It is therefore just  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 that you will prevent both king and queen from winning tricks if you know how to handle the A-J-10 finesse. The great secret is to be able to lead the suit twice from the weak hand and to play the ten the first time and the jack the second unless a high card is put on second hand. The trouble is to arrange for those two leads, and that is where the beginner fails.

If you lead from the weak hand to the strong and a small card is played second hand you are sure to lose the trick if you play the ten third hand, but that is part of the scheme. Suppose it goes to the queen, as in the first diagram. If you can put the weak hand in again and finesse the jack on the second round, it is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 that it will hold the trick and that the ace will

be good for the third round. This of course refers to no-trumpers or to the trump suit or after the trumps have been exhausted.

If you lead from the weak hand and either king or queen is played second hand, as it would be in the third diagram, the finesse is no longer required, because you have caught one of the cards you intended to finesse against. The play is then to win the trick with the ace and to force out the other high card by leading one of your two equals, the jack or ten.

The difficulty in this finesse is not so much in the making it as it is in providing for the lead to come twice from the weak hand, as it is usually the hand with the A-J-10 that has all the high cards in the other suits if the make is no trumps. This provision for the lead is the thing that taxes the player's skill. Any average player may see the finesse and may know that he should make it twice in the same suit, but he does not foresee the importance of arranging matters so that the lead shall come right for the play. Take this case:

♥ A K Q 10 7	
♦ A J 10 7 2	
◆ J 3 2	
♠ .....	
♥ 5 4 2	Y
♦ Q 4 3	A B
◆ A 8	Z
♠ Q 9 8 5 2	
♥ J 9	♥ 8 6 3
♦ 8 5	♦ K 9 6
◆ Q 7 6	♦ K 10 9 5 4
♠ J 10 7 6 4 3	♠ A K

Z dealt and bid one spade, which A doubled, and Y called one heart, B going on to two in diamonds. Y bid two hearts, and all having passed, B led the king of spades, so as to show his re-entry card before starting his diamonds. Y trumped the spade with the seven and led the ten of hearts, which he overtook with Z's jack, so as to lead the club through and take the A-J-10 finesse.

The ten of clubs went to B's king and he led another spade, which Y trumped. Y then led his ace of clubs and failing to drop the queen he led a small one and let Z trump it. He then trumped himself in again with a spade, but after his trump lead each adversary had a trump left, so that B ruffed the next trick and led a diamond, upon which A made his ace, took home his spade queen, and then returned the diamond, trumping the last trick with the five of hearts and setting the contract for 50 points.

After the hand Y spent some time arguing that he should have led a diamond instead of a spade after ruffing out the clubs, because if A put on the ace and led his winning spade Y could refuse to trump, and when A led another spade Y would still pass, as Z had the top spade. B would have trumped it and made the king of diamonds, which Y would also have passed, but when A trumped Z's queen of diamonds Y could have overtrumped, caught the trump and made good his contract.

This is all very ingenious and very much like double dummy, but it is entirely unnecessary. What Y should have done was to arrange for two club lead from Z's hand, so as to take the double finesse in Y's hand.

Had he trumped the first spade trick with the queen and led the ten, putting Z in with the jack, he would have got his first finesse. By trumping the next spade lead with the king and leading the seven he could have put Z in again with the nine of trumps. On the second round of clubs the finesse of the jack would have held. Y could then have pulled all the trumps and made all his clubs, winning three by cards instead of losing his contract.

One thing about this finesse is that it does not matter how the high cards are divided—the ace may be in one hand and the jack ten in the other—as the two tricks can still be made whether the second hand covers or not, provided the lead is always to the hand with the ace and not from it. The only trouble is that unless the player has the nine also he may be obliged to block himself or the adversary may block him. In all such cases the important thing is not only to get into the lead twice but to get the hand in when the suit is established. Here is a case that illustrates this position:

♥ 9 7 3	
♦ Q 9	
◆ A 8 6 5 2	
♠ 10 6 4	
♥ K J 10 5 2	Y
♦ 10 6 5	A B
◆ K 7	
♠ A 5 2	Z
♥ A Q	♥ 8 6 4
♦ A K 8 2	♦ J 7 4 3
◆ J 10 4	♦ Q 9 3
♠ K J 9 3	♠ Q 8 7

The score was 20 to 0 in favor of A and B on the rubber game. Z bid one no trump and A overcalled with two hearts, Y and B both passing. Z, with only two hearts in hand, was afraid A might go game, so he overcalled with two no trumps.

A led the ten of hearts, B played the six and Z won with the queen. When Z led the jack of diamonds so as to take the finesse A put on the king second hand, which some players believe to be the right play, although it is difficult to see what difference it makes, as the A-J-10 must make two tricks if the king and queen are divided.

Y won the king with the ace and returned the small diamond, but B held off with the queen, hoping dummy could not get in again before the hearts were cleared. Z won with the ten and returned the small one, A beginning a reverse discard in spades to show his re-entry. When B returned the heart Z won it and led a small club, putting dummy in to make his two established diamonds, which just gave Z the game.

Beginners are continually making the mistake of playing for something else instead of arranging first of all for this A-J-10 finesse. Here is a case in point:

♥ A J 4		
♣ J 10 6		
♦ A 8 5 3		
♠ J 3 2		
♥ K 8 2	Y	♥ 9 7 6 5 3
♣ 7 2	A	♣ K Q 3
♦ K 9 2	B	♦ J 10 6
♠ K Q 10 9 5	Z	♠ 7 6
♥ Q 10		
♣ A 9 8 5 4		
♦ Q 7 4		
♠ A 8 4		

Z bid one no trump and all passed. A led the king of spades and Z won it with the ace, returning the eight so as to make the jack good for a trick, hoping that one of the red suits would be opened up to his tenaces. In this he made the common mistake of imagining the adversaries would play his game for him. A let the jack win the second trick.

Now if Y comes through with the jack of clubs and the finesse loses, three spades make in A's hand, but there is nothing else to do, so Y led the club. B false carded the king and Z won it with the ace and returned the suit, fully expecting A to win with the queen, but B let the ten hold. Another club put B in, A discarding a heart.

B led the jack of diamonds and Z covered with the queen, so as to kill A's king if he had it, which it did. The return of the diamond put B in again and he took a chance on a third round, so that A won with the nine and made all his spades. The result was that Z just

got his contract when he might easily have won the game.

The correct play of the hand was for Z to let the spades alone and to lead the queen of hearts the moment he got in. A would conventionally cover the honor with an honor on the chance of making a ten good in his partner's hand, and the ace would win. The jack of clubs from Y's hand would then give Z the play to clear the suit, because no matter whether B refuses to win the second round or not Z will never let up until both king and queen are out of the way, as he has no fear of the spades while Y holds the jack guarded.

If B leads a spade after the clubs are cleared Y gets in with the jack and leads a small heart to Z, whose ten is good for re-entry. After Z has made his two established clubs he can put Y in with a diamond and let Y make the jack of hearts, which gives him four by cards and the game.

This finesse has been explained on the assumption that the declarer has to lead the suit; but it should be evident that the process is precisely the same if a small card is led through the A-J-10 combination, as the only way to make two tricks is to finesse the jack or ten second hand. If both king and queen are to the left of the combination and guarded they must make. If not, the finesse must succeed.

It will sometimes happen that the king or queen is led up to or through the combination, and many players think the first trick should be given up so as to make three tricks if the suit is led again. It is usually much

safer to win the king or queen with the ace and to force the other with the jack or ten, as the adversaries are almost certain to shift.

Some players profess to attach some importance to the fact that the adversaries have not led a king queen suit and argue from this that the king and queen are divided, but such inferences are too rigid to be of any practical value in play.

When an adversary holds the king and queen alone and sees this finesse made against him he should always false card the king on the first round, so as to induce the leader to take the second finesse against the queen, which would allow the unguarded queen to make.

## XXV

### BAD FINESSES

One hears so much about the importance of finessing at auction that some persons, beginners especially, imagine that they should take all the finesses that present themselves. This is a serious error, because there are many finesses that are very bad, some not being finesses at all in fact, but simply tricks thrown away, while some are doubtful and others present a choice.

Bad finessing positions should be let alone and an effort made to induce the adversaries to open the suit. Doubtful finesses should be considered from the viewpoint of the score or the size of the contract. If there is a choice between two finesses it will usually be found that one can be determined to be better than the other either on account of the hand to be finessed against or the position of the lead.

In the old whist days the authorities had a great deal to say about finessing, classifying the various forms and giving them appropriate names. Deschapelles, the famous French player and inventor of the Deschapelles coup, made his reputation on his wonderful finesse, the French term for which, by the way, is *impassé*. In spite of all its manifest advantages careful writers on the game have laid it down as an axiom that if the finesse is an even thing to win a trick or to lose it the finesse should never be taken.

If a finesse is necessary to get the odd trick or to win

the game it is not considered an even thing because of the added advantage that success carries with it. But if a finesse which lost would let in a trick which would not otherwise make against the player it is not considered justifiable. Drayson gives this example:

When only three cards remain in the hand, hearts being trumps, Z led a suit of which the ace was gone. Y held the king and jack and did not know who held the thirteenth trump. If he fineses the jack and it holds he wins two spade tricks. If the queen is on his left he never makes the king, because he lets in a winning diamond and the trump takes the last trick no matter where it is.

In such a case the finesse wins a trick if it succeeds and it loses a trick if it does not. Unless the trick is worth something more than the trick itself the authorities seem to think such a finesse should not be taken.

All writers on tactics divide the finesse into two parts, speculative and obligatory, but the old whist authorities made no distinction between the dealer and his adversaries. In auction the adversaries never finesse because the conditions for it cannot arise owing to the exposed dummy hand. All the finessing is done by the declarer, and he has many opportunities to make a mess of it.

Probably the worst of the bad finesses at auction is one that lets in an adverse suit in which you have no protection. While a player will seldom make this mistake if the suit has been led and established against him in the course of play one often does it at the very beginning of the hand, carelessness or inattention being

usually responsible for such an error. Here is a sample of what one sees almost every day:

♥ A Q		
♦ Q 6 2		
◆ 7 2		
♠ J 8 7 4 3 2		
♥ J 10 7 5 4 3 2	Y	♥ K 8 6
♣ .....	A	♣ 10 9 7 5
♦ A J 6	B	♦ K 9 8 5 4
♠ Q 10 6	Z	♠ 5
♥ 9		
♣ A K J 8 4 3		
♦ Q 10 3		
♠ A K 9		

The score being love all on the rubber game Z started with one no trump and A called two in hearts, Y and B passing. Z was afraid A and B might go game in hearts, so he called two no trumps and A, equally afraid of Z, went on to three hearts. This Y doubled, but instead of letting the double stand and playing for penalties Z went three no trumps on the strength of his partner's having the hearts stopped.

A led the fourth best heart and Z carelessly played the queen. B won the trick with the king and led the eight of diamonds so as to cover dummy's seven. Z put on the ten and A won with the jack, returning ace and six, so that B made three more tricks in the suit, leaving Z nothing but the odd and setting the contract for 200 points.

Had Z followed the advice often given in this book, to count up the possibilities of the combined hands be-

fore playing a card from dummy, he would have seen that six clubs and two spades were a certainty and all he had to do was to put the ace of hearts on the first trick to win the game and rubber.

One of the most common faults with the beginner is trying to make a finesse by leading one of the cards with which he hopes to win a trick. One constantly sees the queen led to the ace, or one of both queen and jack led in the same way. No matter which adversary holds the king this attempt at a finesse is bound to fail unless the player has the ten as well as the queen and jack.

Sometimes a player will be so blinded by the attractions of a finesse that he will overlook some much simpler and more rational way of playing the hand. Take this case:

♥ A 7 5 2				
♦ K 7 6				
◆ Q J 3				
♠ A Q 7				
♥ Q 8 3	Y	♥ K J 10 6 4		
♦ Q J 10	A	♦ 4 2		
◆ 10 9 8 5 2	B	♦ K		
♠ 10 9	Z	♠ K 8 6 5 3		
♥ 9				
♦ A 9 8 5 3				
◆ A 7 6 4				
♠ J 4 2				

Y plays the hand at two no trumps.

B did not like the idea of leading a singleton king up to Y, whom he credited with the ace, so he started

with the ten of hearts. Y, looking forward to the finesse in diamonds, thought it better to exhaust A's hearts, so he held off. B continued with the six, A won with the queen and returned the trey, which Y took with the ace, Z discarding a spade and a club.

Y then made the old mistake of leading the queen of diamonds, as if it were a finesse. Z's ace won B's king and the suit was dropped in favor of the jack of spades. This, as the student of tactics will observe, is simply repeating the error just made in the diamond suit, because there is no finesse in such a lead, and it is doubly bad because it is an attempt to finesse against the wrong hand, B being the player with the dangerous suit.

B made his king of spades and his two hearts, Z discarding a club and Y a diamond. B led a club and Y's king won A's ten. After making his two good spades, his diamond and the ace of clubs, the last trick had to be given to A, so that Y and Z got the odd only and were set for fifty points, when they should have won the game.

The first part of the hand was correctly played, exhausting A's hearts by passing two rounds, but there is no finesse, properly so called, in any suit for Y and Z, both diamonds and spades being bad finessing positions. The correct play for Y, after winning the third round of hearts, dummy discarding a spade and a diamond, was to lead a small club, and if B did not cover to duck it, because there is nothing to fear from A.

If A comes through with the spade, leading up to weakness, which would be the most natural thing for him to do, Y must put on the ace second hand, refusing

to take any finesse against the player with the established hearts. If Y now leads the king of clubs and both sides follow suit, all the clubs must make, Y discarding a heart and a spade, neither of which is any good to him.

The only trick left for Y and Z, apparently, is the ace of diamonds. When it unexpectedly drops the king, Y makes two more diamond tricks and the game.

A finesse is sometimes right for one reason and wrong for another and the player sometimes has to decide which road to take. Sometimes both come up in the same hand in two different suits. The writer recently saw a curious instance of a declarer taking a finesse correctly in the first suit and then spoiling it all by a wrong finesse in another suit. Here is the hand:

♥ K Q J 10 5 4		
♦ 8 2		
◆ 10 6 3		
♠ J 8		
♥ 8 6	Y	♥ A 9 7 3 2
♦ 9 3	A	♦ A K 6 5
◆ J 9 7 5 4 2	B	◆ A Q
♠ A Q 2	Z	♠ 5 3
♥ .....		
♦ Q J 10 7 4		
◆ K 8		
♠ K 10 9 7 6 4		

The winning declaration was three no trumps by B, doubled by Y. Z led a spade and B played the queen second hand from dummy, as he saw a successful

finesse was the only chance to keep a re-entry in A's hand for the diamonds.

But when that finesse held B made the mistake of taking a finesse in diamonds as well, and Z cleared up his spades at once, leading the king for fear the ace and jack might make separately. After making the ace of spades and ace of diamonds B led two rounds of clubs. Then, correctly inferring that Z had no hearts, he led a small one, putting Y in. Y led back the king and followed with the five, so that B made two heart tricks, but was set for 200 points.

The first finesse in the spade suit was correctly played, as it is the only hope for the diamonds. But the second finesse, in the diamond suit, was the only way to lose the game. Let B put on his ace third hand and lead the queen, and the only distribution of the diamonds that can defeat him is for one adversary to hold three to the king, so that he can hold off and let the queen win so as to block the suit.

As Z cannot do this, his king would be forced on the second round and the spade ace would bring in four established diamonds, no matter what Z might lead after the king of diamonds. These diamond tricks, with the ace and king of clubs and ace of hearts, would have given B four by cards, doubled, game and rubber, making a difference of 530 points, all of which can be attributed to one bad finesse following a very good one.

## XXVI

### GETTING RID OF LOSING CARDS

It is comparatively easy to count up the winning cards in the hand at auction, but few players pay sufficient attention to counting up the losers. In this respect the auction player might borrow a useful lesson from skat, in which the great art is to figure out the losses in order to arrive at a correct estimate of how much of them you can stand. When the auction player sees that he has two or three losing cards among the winners he should be careful to calculate for getting rid of them if he cannot stand their loss and still carry out his contract.

In bidding on the hands auction is a game of aces and kings and the partner is relied on for average support in the matter of high cards. What becomes of the little fellows, the losers? In a no-trumper the object is to get rid of the losing cards in one suit by discarding them on the winning cards in another suit, and this is the foundation of the philosophy that leads every one to play the long suit game.

Give a player six clubs to the quart major in one hand and only two clubs in the other and you provide him with an opportunity to get rid of four cards in other suits which are not trick winners. These are four cards which the adversaries might have won had they been able to get into the lead and known what to play.

All the miraculous escapes that are made in no-

trumpers are due to the fact that the adversaries did not happen to hit upon the suit in which you had a number of losing cards or no protection at all. After such a piece of luck one often hears some such remark as, "If they ever led a spade, partner, they could have made the whole suit."

In a no-trumper the path is plain and getting rid of losing cards is easy if you can only keep the lead, because there is only the one way to get rid of them. Even if you have to take a chance occasionally and give up the lead the other side may not make the right shift, because they are playing to establish long suits, just as you are, and they do not care to leave the job half finished.

In the trump declarations this mistake is very rare on their part, because they are not playing for any long suits but are getting home their aces and kings, and the moment they see the high cards in one suit are against them they try something else, and they usually hit it right.

But in the trump calls the declarer has a double chance to get rid of losing cards. He may either discard them on the winning cards of a plain suit, as at no trumps, or he may trump them. Both methods depend for success upon one condition; the hand that holds the losing cards must be short of the suit in which the other hand holds winning cards or the hand that is going to trump must be out of the suit in which the other hand has the losing cards.

Skill in getting rid of losing cards in trump declarations is one of the earmarks of the expert and there

are very few players who do not miss a number of tricks in every rubber simply by not seeing or by not providing for some method of getting rid of their dead-wood. Sit behind any average player and you will see something like this in almost any rubber you happen to watch:

♥ K Q J 6 5		
♣ A Q		
♦ K Q 2		
♠ 10 8 6		
♥ 9 8 2	Y	♥ A 4 3
♣ 10 6 4	A	♣ K 9 2
♦ 8 3	B	♦ A J 10 9 6 4
♠ A Q J 9 2	Z	♦ K
♥ 10 7		
♣ J 8 7 5 3		
♦ 7 5		
♠ 7 5 4 3		

The winning bid was three diamonds, B playing the hand.

Z led the ten of hearts in answer to his partner's declarations and B won the trick with the ace. Seeing the entire spade between the two hands he immediately started to exhaust the trumps by leading two rounds. Y won the second round and made two heart tricks and then, after a moment's consideration, he concluded to make sure of setting the contract before everything else by getting home his ace of clubs, giving up the tenace. Then he led another heart, after which there was nothing left but the king of trumps, but A and B were set for 50 points.

Instead of this reverse B could easily have made five by cards and the game. He makes two mistakes in leading from a trump suit in which he has an ace-jack-ten finesse and in overlooking an opportunity to get rid of two losing cards.

Upon winning the first trick with the ace of hearts B should have used the spades in the dummy to get rid of his losing cards instead of trying to get out the trumps. By leading the king of spades and overtaking it with the ace he could have got rid of two losing hearts on the queen and jack of spades. It would then be open to him to continue with a fourth round of spades, Z being marked with the seven, or to lead to the club king or to try the finesse in trumps.

The spade being a forcing card is probably the best play and Y would have trumped it with the queen, as the deuce would be sending a boy to the mill. This would have given B a pretty play, as he would over-trump with the ace and lead one of his equals, just as if he were taking an ace jack ten finesse on a lead from dummy, covered second hand. This would force Y's king. Now if Y leads another heart, B trumps it and leads the six of trumps, putting dummy in with the eight, which gives A a trick with the deuce of spades, after which the king of clubs must make, as the ace is on the right side. The only tricks Y and Z would make if the hand were played in this way would be the king of trumps and the ace of clubs.

Here is another hand in which the declarer just missed going game by not getting rid of his losing cards, although he imagined that he played the whole

thing very cleverly in getting the lead from one hand to the other in three different suits.

♥ Q 7 5		
♦ Q 10 9 6		
◊ 9 7 6		
♣ K 9 5		
♥ A 10 9 6 4 2	Y	♥ K
♣ 3	A	♦ A 7 5 4 2
◊ A 4	B	◊ K Q 3
♦ Q J 10 2	Z	♦ 8 6 4 3
♥ J 8 3		
♦ K J 8		
◊ J 10 8 5 2		
♦ A 7		

Z bid one diamond and A one heart, which every one passed, and Y led a diamond to his partner's declaration. A won the trick with the ace and immediately started to make some of his small trumps by ruffing out the club suit, which he seemed to think was the only play in the hand.

First he led a small club, won it with the ace and returned it so that he could trump. Then he put dummy in again by leading his small diamond and trumped another club. By leading a small trump to the king he got dummy in a third time and led the fourth round of clubs. This Z trumped with the jack and A overtrumped him with the ace. A then led trumps so as to get two for one and Y put on the queen and led another diamond so as to get his spade king led up to. B led the established club, which Y trumped, leading a

small spade, making his king at the last and saving the game.

The only discussion about this hand after the play was the advisability of A overtrumping Z's jack, as some thought Z might lead a spade and establish A's suit. This made no difference, however, as Y and Z must make two tricks either with the jack and queen or the queen and seven of trumps. The fault lay in not getting rid of the losing cards in A's hand.

After winning the first trick with the ace of diamonds A should have led a small trump and upon dummy's two winning diamonds he should have discarded his losing club. This would have enabled him to hold the command of the club suit, and by leading a small club and trumping it he could have got two rounds of trumps, exhausting the adversaries. After the lead goes to Y's queen of trumps A must make two more trump tricks, the ace of clubs and a spade, no matter what Y may do. This wins the game instead of stopping at three by cards.

A fault very common with beginners is too great a hurry to get out the trumps to defend a big suit instead of stopping to consider the disadvantages of losing the lead in case the trumps are not all winners. Take this case:

♥ A			
♣ K 2			
♦ K Q J 9 8 7 3			
♠ 8 5 2			
♥ J 10 9 7 3 2	Y	♥ 8 6 4	
♣ 8 7 3	A	♣ J 10 5 4	
♦ A	B	♦ 6 5	
♠ A K Q	Z	♠ 10 9 7 4	
♥ K Q 5			
♣ A Q 9 6			
♦ 10 4 2			
♠ J 6 3			

A doubled four diamonds and Y redoubled on the strength of his partner's no-trumper to help him.

B led a heart to his partner's declaration and Y won the first trick. With two more heart tricks and three or four club tricks in sight he at once led trumps. A got the lead and took home his three spades immediately, setting the contract for 200 points.

This is entirely Y's fault for being too quick with the trumps. Upon winning the first trick he should have seen the danger of losing those three tricks in spades and have arranged to get rid of them in one hand or the other.

By leading two rounds of clubs, king first, Y should have put dummy in and by leading the two winning hearts in Z's hand he could have got rid of two of the losing spades in Y's. There would then be nothing to lose by leading a third round of clubs and discarding the last spade upon it, which would have left the adversaries nothing to make but the ace of trumps, giving Y and Z a little slam.

Instead of losing 200 points on the redoubled contract Y would have won 468, which is a difference of 668, all due to neglecting to get rid of losing cards before leading an unestablished trump suit. Six by cards at 28 a trick would have been 168, to which would be added 100 for fulfilling the contract after being doubled and redoubling, and 200 more for the two extra tricks.

The secret of success in this particular piece of tactics lies, of course, in keeping the lead, so that the adversaries shall not be able to shift until you have got rid of the suit in which they have the winning cards.

As a rule, the error lies in leading trumps too soon, but it may be taking a finesse too early in the game, or taking one that should not be taken at all. The thing for the beginner to do is to stop and examine the hand for losing cards, and then to ask himself if there is no way to get rid of them before he loses the lead.

## XXVII

### HOLDING UP AN ADVERSE SUIT

There is one part of the art of bringing in long suits at no trumps in auction that very few beginners understand and that many an expert misses. Many who do understand it are afraid to try it, their confidence in the ultimate outcome being usually very slight. This part of tactics is permitting inferior cards in the hands of the adversaries to win the first round or two of the suit in order to make the dregs of it for yourself. It goes hard with the beginner to let a nine win the trick when he holds both ace and king himself.

The process is technically known as ducking, because the player dodges the responsibility of the lead and holds the master card of the suit in hand. Its chief usefulness arises upon three occasions: When the hand holding a long suit cannot clear it up and still hold the lead and has no re-entry in any other suit; when the partner will have none of the suit to lead if the lead is lost in establishing it; when it is important to retain the lead on the third round instead of on the first and second only.

Ducking in itself is a very simple process, as all one has to do is to play the smallest card of the suit from both hands no matter what the adversaries put up. The great difficulty is to judge when the suit should be ducked and when the process should be abandoned after it is started. One may have to duck a suit only once,

or it may be twice or even three times, but the motive is the same in all, to retain the command until the suit can be run off without a break.

Any player who makes a practice of ducking should be able to count the spots on cards pretty well and also be able to infer the location of the high cards that are out against him unplayed. A rather amusing instance of successful ducking was spoiled on the next trick through want of a little deliberation in these inferences. This was the situation.

♥ K Q J 7 5 4		
♦ K Q 8 2		
♦ .....		
♠ Q J 7		
♥ 10 6 2		♥ A 9 3
♦ J 9		♦ A 10 5 4
♦ A K 7 6 4 2	A . B	♦ 9 8 3
♠ 8 2	Z	♠ A 10 9
♥ 8		
♦ 7 6 3		
♦ Q J 10 5		
♠ K 6 5 4 3		

The score was love all on the rubber game. Z started with a spade and A bid one in diamonds, Y said one heart when he should have said two, and B one no trump. A overcalled with two diamonds to show his partner that he had nothing else, Y went two hearts and when B went two no trumps Y pushed him up to three.

Z led the eight of hearts and B passed two rounds to be sure that Z was out. Z discarded two clubs. B then

led the nine of diamonds and Z played the five, never dreaming that A would duck the trick with the whole heart suit in Y's hand against him, but A put on the deuce. Of course B expected Y to win the trick, but what else was there for B to do? If he takes home his two diamond tricks his contract is hopeless unless he is lucky enough to find the diamonds evenly split.

When B followed with another diamond Z covered with the ten, and the declarer did not stop to think what he was doing, but put on the king from dummy instead of ducking the suit a second time, which he would have done had he taken the time to infer the exact cards in Z's hand. It is then too late to lead a small diamond and let Z have it, as B has exhausted his power to put dummy in, so he made the ace also.

Realizing too late his error he led the jack of clubs through Y, who had echoed in that suit with the eight and deuce on the diamonds, and then discarded a spade. B won the queen with the ace and led back the four, which made his ten good, but the contract was set for two tricks, B making the odd only.

The student of tactics will see that if B reads Z's cards more carefully, instead of being carried away by his astonishment at winning the first diamond trick with the nine, and ducks the second diamond lead as well as the first, it does not matter what Z leads. Suppose he tries the club in answer to his partner's reverse discard, A plays the jack and the ace kills the queen. Another diamond from B and Y must make four discards. If he keeps the hearts, B makes the ace and the ten of spades, as he will have A 10 9 to Z's

king at the end. If Y keeps the three spades or even two of them, B will make the ten and five of clubs, game and rubber in either case.

In many cases a player requires a little luck to help him out when he is ducking suits in this way, but there is always more or less of this in a no-trumper, as the adversaries are never quite sure what they are doing. Here is an instance:

♥ 6 4			
♦ A 10 9 8 3			
◆ J 10 9			
♠ K Q 10			
♥ A 8 5	Y	♥ J 10 2	
♦ Q J 6	A	♦ 7 2	
◆ A K 8 7	B	◆ 3 2	
♠ J 6 5	Z	♠ A 8 7 4 3 2	
♥ K Q 9 7 3			
♦ K 5 4			
◆ Q 6 5 4			
♠ 9			

Z bid one heart, and when A called no trumps all passed. Y led the heart, B played the ten second hand and A let the queen hold, so as to remain tenace with ace jack. Z led a small diamond and A put the ace on second hand, leading the jack of spades. When Y put on the queen B ducked it.

Y came through with another heart, which gave Z the tenace over B, the play of jack, king, ace leaving the nine good. Again A led a spade and let Y hold the trick with the king, Z discarding the five of clubs. This not being of the conventional size for a single card

reverse discard and Z having led a small diamond, Y come back with the jack of diamonds. This was very lucky for A, who snatched the trick and just made his contract.

There is one advantage in ducking suits which is not even hinted at in any of the text-books on whist, bridge, or auction so far published, and that is that it compels the adversaries to keep a guard on the ducked suit, which not infrequently breaks up the rest of the hand and brings about some of those interesting positions found in bridge problems. Here is a case in point:

♥ J 10 9 8 6 3		
♦ Q 8		
♦ 10 9 8		
♦ K 9		
♥ 5 4 2	Y	♥ A K Q
♦ 9	A	♦ A 6 5 4
♦ 6 4 3	B	♦ A Q J 2
♦ A J 6 5 3 2	Z	♦ 8 7
♦ 7		
♦ K J 10 7 3 2		
♦ K 7 5		
♦ Q 10 4		

B won the declaration at two no trumps, and it was Z's lead, Y having declared hearts.

Z did not lead the heart, because he knew B must have the suit stopped and Z could not lead it again, whereas Y might be able to lead clubs more than once to Z, so Z started with the club ten. As B let this win, Z followed with the seven, his partner being marked with the queen at least. B let the queen hold also.

Y led his top heart, on which B played the ace second hand and led the eight of spades. Z and A both ducked the trick and Y won it with the nine. Now Y knew from his partner's play of the heart seven that Z could not hold any more hearts, because if dummy's hearts are examined it will be seen that the seven is the lowest possible heart in Z's hand, and had he held king or queen with it his original opening would have been a heart.

This reasoning leads Y to abandon the hearts and try the diamonds. B played the queen and Z won the trick with the king, leading another club, on which both A and Y discarded hearts. This trick B won, but in the actual game B fell down at this stage by leading the seven of spades and finessing the jack, forgetting that it was impossible to drop both king and queen and also impossible for dummy ever to get in again.

Y came through with another diamond, and although B made all the rest of that suit and two hearts he had to lose a club trick at the end, which set him for fifty points. It looks as if the ace of spades would have just saved this contract had he made the trick with it when he had the chance, and that was the comment of the spectators.

But that ace was worth a great deal more than one trick. It should have won him the game.

Let B abandon all hope of making the spade suit after the first round falls so unfavorably and let him count up his resources and he will see that if he keeps that spade suit in the dummy, still headed by the ace,

it will force the adversaries to guard the suit and the hand will go very differently for B.

Upon getting in with the ace of clubs at the sixth trick let him make three diamond tricks and two hearts, so that he has a club and a spade left. Z will be in a hole because if he unguards the spade A makes two tricks in that suit. If Z lets go the club so as to keep two spades B's six of clubs is good for a trick. Yet there are people who say these discard problems never come up in actual play.

As the foregoing hand shows, it often pays to duck the adversaries' suit as well as your own with a view to making an extra trick in it eventually, although the usual object is to exhaust one opponent only by holding up. It is only when ducking is resorted to for the specific purpose of making the smallest cards of the suit good for tricks that the stratagem properly comes under that head. Here is a situation that shows the true duck in an adverse suit:

♥ 8 6 3		
♦ K Q 9 5		
♦ K 6 3		
♦ 7 6 2		
♥ K 9 5 4	Y	♥ Q 10 7
♦ .....	A B	♦ A 8 7 6 4 2
♦ A Q 9 5	Z	♦ 2
♦ 9 8 5 4 3		♦ A J 10
♥ A J 2		
♦ J 10 8		
♦ J 10 8 7 4		
♦ K Q		

Z dealt and bid one diamond which A doubled to show the suit stopped twice, as he thought. Y passed, as he was satisfied he could kill one of A's stoppers with the king, but B went no trumps, Z bid two in diamonds to push him up a bit and B went up, whereupon Y took a chance and doubled the two no trumps, chiefly because he lay over A with the diamonds and thought Z had about seven of them to bid eight tricks against a no-trumper.

Z led his fourth best diamond and Y thoughtlessly won with the king, A playing small. Not wishing to lead the suit right up to A Q 9, Y started his own suit, leading the king of clubs. B let this win. Y followed with the queen, and B let that win also. Y now concluded his partner had the ace, so he led a little club for the third round and B passed it up like the rest.

Z led the king of spades and B won it with the ace and returned the jack, so as to make the ten good, there being no hurry about the clubs. Then Z, who imagines all this time that his partner held the A K Q and other clubs tries to get him in by underplaying the hearts.

This was a mistake. When you have the contract set for certain it is always better to set it, as you may be mistaken about the other things.

B put up the king of hearts second hand from dummy and made his two good diamonds, discarding the queen and ten of hearts from his own hand. Then he put himself in with a spade and made the three established clubs, just getting his contract and winning the game at the double value of the tricks.

The student will see that had Y passed up the first

trick, by using Foster's eleven rule the play would have been different.

There are double plays in auction as well as in baseball, and it is sometimes necessary for a player to duck two suits in the same hand, his own and his adversary's, in order to get all there is in the cards. The opportunity to bring off a double play of this kind arises more often than one would imagine. Here is a case in which the declarer missed a great chance:

♥ A 9 5 4		
♣ K Q 3		
♦ 9 6 2		
♠ K 4 2		
♥ 8 3 2		♥ K J 7
♣ A 8 7 6 5 4	A	♣ 10 9 2
♦ 5	B	♦ A K 8
♠ J 8 5	Z	♠ A Q 9 7
♥ Q 10 6		
♣ J		
♦ Q J 10 7 4 3		
♠ 10 6 3		

Z dealt and bid one diamond and A said two clubs, which Y doubled, B pulling his partner out with no trumps. Z and A passed and Y went to his partner's assistance with two diamonds, his hand being two tricks above normal. This forced B to two no trumps.

Z led the queen of diamonds, Y played the six and B made the old mistake of false carding the ace, betraying the position of the king, but that did not matter in this particular hand. B led the ten of clubs, won the jack

with the ace and tried to drop the king and queen together by leading a second round. Z discarded a spade. Y came back with the nine of diamonds and B held off to exhaust Y, who was the player with the best club.

Z overtook the nine with the ten and led a third round, putting B in. B led his last club, simply because he did not see anything else to do, Z still discarding spades. When Y came through with the nine of hearts, B finessed, hoping he might force the ace. Z won with the queen and made his three established diamonds, A discarding clubs.

On the first two diamonds, Y discarded a small heart and a small spade. B had to keep a guard on the king of hearts and discarded two spades. On the third diamond Y blanked his king of spades, which was useless anyway, and B had to discard the spade queen. A spade from Z put B in and he lost two heart tricks, so that instead of making the eight tricks he contracted for, doubled, he was set for 400 points.

The only part of the hand that B played correctly was in passing the second round of diamonds. Had he made a double play and ducked his own club suit as well he would have won the game with ease.

When he led the ten of clubs and Z put on the jack B should have ducked the suit, letting Z hold the trick. Z will go on with his diamonds and B will hold off for one round, as he did in the actual game. When he gets in on the third diamond all he has to do is to lead another club and duck it again, which must establish the suit.

What can Y do? If he tries the heart underplay B

must follow the old whist maxim of never letting a player with an established suit get into the lead with anything less than an ace, and put on the king second hand. This will hold the trick, and after dummy has made four club tricks the tenace in spades will win the game and the ace of hearts dies.

## XXVIII

### RISKS TO WIN GAME

Among the many valuable axioms left by Deschapelles to the whist-playing world, which includes the votaries of all such games as whist, bridge, auction and royals, none has been more often quoted than his analysis of playing to the score. To quote from the French of his great disciple, Lahure, this is a summary of Deschapelles's ideas:

1. The aim of every good player is first to save the game and then to win it.
2. Never risk the odd trick in the hope of making two by cards.
3. If two tricks can win the game and you can lose one and still save it, go for the game.
4. Never risk the game in the hope of making an extra trick.
5. If the trick will neither save nor win the odd trick, take any risks to make more than that one trick.

Substitute "contract" for "odd trick" and you have some excellent philosophy ready made for the modern game of auction. But saving the contract is more important than winning the odd trick at whist, because of the disparity between the scores at auction, according to which side wins. At whist or bridge the tricks were of the same value to either side, but in auction a trick may be worth anywhere from four to twelve times as

much to the adversaries as it is to the declarer if it is the trick that swings the contract.

Some players are unnecessarily nervous about the contract, probably because they do not stop to count up the possibilities of the combined hands before they play to the first trick. If they were to do this and ascertain where any extra tricks are to be made they would soon discover that such an examination would disclose still further tricks, which might not only save the contract but win the game.

It is remarkable how easily some players are discouraged or disconcerted at their first sight of dummy's cards. Instead of searching for a possible way to go for the game, no matter how great the risk, they practically lie down and let the adversaries kick them.

Here is a hand which shows how a player may miss an opportunity to take a desperate chance to save his contract even when he saw, or thought he saw, it was hopelessly lost.

♥ 10							
♦ Q 8							
◆ 9 7 6 5 4 3 2							
♠ Q 6 4							
♥ A 9 8 7 6 3	Y						
♦ A 9	A	·	B				
◆ K				♥ J 5 2			
♠ K 9 5 2	Z			♦ J 10 6			
♥ K Q 4				◆ Q J 10			
♦ K 7 5 4 3 2				♠ A 10 8 7			
◆ A 8							
♠ J 3							

Z played the hand at two no trumps doubled by B. A led his fourth best heart and Z won the jack with the king. The hopelessness of the diamond suit being apparent with four honors against it and no re-entry, Z started his clubs, winning the first trick with the queen and returning the eight.

B covered with the jack, as his partner had dropped the nine, and Z, reading ace and ten on his left, put on his king, so as to throw the lead into A's hand, because if he left the lead with B that player would come through with a heart and A would make them all.

A took the club trick and cleared his hearts by leading ace and another and then Z cleared his clubs, A starting a reverse discard in spades with the nine and Y keeping all his spades, so as to protect that suit.

B suspected the echo and came through Z with a small spade, putting A in. On A's three established hearts Z discarded a small diamond and two clubs, so as to stop the spade suit. A read the situation and led the diamond king, so that Z had to lose a spade trick at the end. This left him with only five actual tricks on a contract to make eight, doubled, so that he lost 300 points.

Z's error in this hand is due to want of courage enough to take a chance. If the clubs lie as he thinks they do the contract is absolutely hopeless no matter how he plays, as A's ten of clubs will be top, even if Z's king forces the ace, and this ten of clubs will bring in the hearts eventually whether A has a winning spade or not.

If we apply the fifth maxim of Deschapelles, "If the

trick will neither save nor win the contract, take any risk," it will be clear that Z should have played for A, who is marked with the ace of clubs, to have that card blank, and to be obliged to win his partner's jack if Z ducks it, because no other condition can be imagined that will enable Z to get his contract.

Had Z taken this chance and held up his king of clubs it is very unlikely that A would have led a spade, and much more probable that he would have thought his partner might hold the queen of hearts or would have at least gone on with that suit and established it. This would have given Z both his contract and the game, as he would have made his heart, four established clubs and the ace of diamonds; two by cards doubled worth 40 points, instead of losing 300.

There are many cases in which a player should weigh the chances in favor of two entirely different methods of playing a hand, either of which would make his contract. A little thought given to this part of the game will sometimes show that while either of these ways will save the contract easily enough, one of them might win the game, while the other could not do so.

## XXIX

### ESTABLISHING A SUIT

There is probably nothing more characteristic than the way a player develops a hand at auction. While the ultimate object of one player may be the same as that of another they will approach it in entirely different manners, one getting at a suit by direct attack while another gets to it only after forcing discards from his adversaries. One will trump a suit out, while another will prefer to take a finesse.

To the beginner most of this seems to be matter of temperament and it looks to him as if it were a mere guess which of two things to do. What he wants is some easily applied rule for the solution of the problem, so that he shall be able to quote authority for pursuing a certain path. Sad to say, one cannot play auction by machinery.

The difficulty arises almost exclusively in no-trumpers and hinges upon the proper selection of the suit to play for. Most of the text-books lay down the rule that one should always play for the suit that is longest between the two hands, the declarer's and dummy's, so that if the declarer finds he has five hearts and eight clubs, seven diamonds and six spades, the clubs are the ones to play for.

The principle underlying this maxim is that the longer the suit between the two hands the less cards in it there are for the adversaries to hold and the easier it will be

to exhaust them. Given a suit of eight cards, five in one hand and three in the other, only jack high, and another suit of five cards, three in one hand, ace king queen high, and the eight card suit is the one to play for, as the other will play itself.

If you start by making the winning cards in the short suit, you leave the adversaries with winning small cards against you. If you get their high cards in your long weak suit out of the way, the high cards in your short suit will bring the longer suit into play. The extreme examples of this, given in Foster's "Complete Bridge," is a suit of nine clubs, only ten high, and a suit of five spades, with all five honors. By leading the clubs every time the declarer gets in, he makes them good for four tricks.

But this rule of always playing for the suit that is longest between the two hands has its exceptions and also its limitations, the usual classification being about as follows:

1. Play for the suit in which you have the greatest number, counting both hands.
2. When the number is equal, play for the suit in which the distribution is more unequal.
3. When the number and distribution are equal, play for the suit which is the more easy to establish.
4. When all these points are equal, play for the suit which is accompanied by cards of re-entry.
5. Everything else being equal, play for the suit that is shown on the table.
6. Never go for a suit in which you cannot possibly make any extra tricks.

One of the most common faults with the beginner, next to that of giving up the winning cards in the adversaries' suit too soon, is in taking home all his own winning cards too early in the hand as if he were afraid of losing them. He forgets that after he has made all those tricks he will have to play the suit in which the high cards are against him, so that there is nothing gained. The art of good play by the declarer at auction is to make tricks with the small cards of his longest suit.

Here is a typical example of a hand which was badly developed by the declarer:

♥ Q 5			
♣ 8 7 5 3			
♦ K 9 8 2			
♠ A 5 2			
♥ K J 8 6 3	Y	♥ 10 9 2	
♣ K Q	A B	♣ A 6	
♦ 7 6 4	Z	♦ J 10 5 3	
♠ J 7 3		♠ K 9 6 4	
♥ A 7 4			
♣ J 10 9 4 3			
♦ A Q			
♠ Q 10 8			

Z dealt and started out with a bid of no trumps, which all passed. A led his fourth best heart and Z put on the queen from dummy second hand, which was about the only thing he got right in the whole play.

He then started to make his diamonds on the assumption that the high cards might drop in three rounds and make his nine good for a trick. After lead-

ing a small one from dummy's hand and making the ace and queen, he made the same old mistake of trying to take a finesse in spades by leading the queen to the ace.

B won the trick with the king and came through with a heart, which Z took with the ace—another mistake. Z then led the ten of spades, which A covered with the jack on the chance that his partner had the nine guarded and Y won the trick with the ace. Of course the king of diamonds was the next lead, but it failed to drop the jack and ten, so that Z suddenly realized that all four suits were established against him and he could not make another trick in anything. As he played the hand he was set for 50 points.

By applying the very first of the rules for choosing the suit to play for at no trumps it will be found that as soon as the queen of hearts held the first trick and the adversary's suit is eliminated from consideration there are nine clubs, six diamonds and six spades between the two hands; therefore the suit to play for is clubs and Y should lead one at once, leaving the six-card suits alone.

B would pass and A would continue the heart suit with one of his two equals, king and jack. Instead of giving up the command of his adversary's suit at once Z's play would be to hold off until B was exhausted, so that B should not be able to lead hearts. This Z failed to do in the actual game.

The next heart Z would have to win, Y discarding a spade. By leading the jack of clubs B would be forced into the lead and no mattter what he did Y and Z must

make three clubs, three diamonds and the ace queen of spades if B tries leading spades through Z.

The best thing B can do is to lead the diamond. After Z has made his ace and queen he can lead the four of clubs and put Y in. After Y makes his king of diamonds he returns the club and puts Z in and Y makes the ace of spades at the end, three by cards and the game, instead of losing a simple contract to make the odd trick. As already pointed out, if B tries the spade instead of the diamond Y and Z make four by cards.

When two suits are equally long but one is more easily established than the other the question of re-entry may have to settle between them. Here is a hand in which the declarer very cleverly took advantage of the situation by sitting on the fence until he saw which was the better way to jump, furnishing a rather disagreeable surprise for his adversary at the same time.

♥ 9 5 4	
♣ Q J 10 7 6 5	
♦ Q 10	
♠ J 2	
	i
♥ Q J 10 3 2	Y
♣ 9 8 3	A B
♦ J 9	
♠ 9 4 3	Z
	♥ 8 7 6
	♣ A 2
	♦ K 7 5
	♠ K Q 7 6 5
♥ A K	
♣ K 4	
♦ A 8 6 4 3 2	
♠ A 10 8	

At the score of love all, rubber game, Z dealt and declared one no trump, which every one passed. A led

the queen of hearts, B echoed with the seven and Z won the trick with the king, avoiding the common error of false carding the ace.

The clubs and diamonds are equal in number and in distribution, but while the clubs have the advantage of being easily cleared for the loss of only one trick, the re-entry is very doubtful if the ace of clubs is held up, which it almost certainly would be if Z led the king.

Z saw that he could lose nothing by trying to get the ace out of the way, because if it fell on the king the club suit alone would win the game. If the ace were held up the next thing would be to see if the queen of diamonds could be made into a re-entry by finessing the ten.

With this definite plan in hand Z led the king of clubs, and, as he had foreseen, the ace was held up, although he did not know who had it. Z then proceeded to the next part of his plan, leading a small diamond and finessing against the jack by playing the ten, hoping it would force the king. This finesse forced B to do a little thinking.

Had the clubs been established, B would have been obliged to win the diamond trick, because to refuse to do so would be to leave Y in the lead with a long suit of clubs, all good for tricks. But as the clubs were not established, B was not afraid of them, although he saw the object of the diamond finesse was to make the queen good for re-entry. By holding up the king of diamonds and letting Y go ahead and clear his clubs, B has Y's hand effectually blocked.

But B forgot about Z's hand and it gave him a nasty

jolt. As soon as the ten of diamonds held the trick, Z saw that the club suit was a dead duck, so he abandoned it and came right back through B with the queen of diamonds. Whether B puts on the king or passes does not matter, because if he allows the queen to win, Z can get in with the ace of spades.

Six diamond tricks, two hearts and the spade ace won the game and rubber, and the beauty of it was that there was no way out of it for A and B.

When a suit is only one card longer in one hand than another suit and the longer suit will take an extra round to clear it, it does not matter much which suit is selected unless the determining factor is the number of stoppers you still hold in the adversaries' suit.

Suppose you hold nine of one suit, distributed five and four, with two winning cards against it, and another suit distributed four and four with only one winning card against it and you have only one stopper in the adversaries' suit. It is easy to see that if you start the suit that will take two rounds to clear, the other side will get their suit going first, whereas if you develop your shorter suit first, you will make it all before they get in with theirs.

In all such cases it is a question of how much you are afraid of their suit and how many discards you can afford. Sometimes it may be better to take what you have while you are sure of it; while at other times it may pay to take a chance and wait.

The further along in the hand the play comes, the more interesting it usually is, especially when it comes down to getting tricks out of the dregs of the shorter

suits when the long suit has all been made. Here is a case:

♥ J 10 3		
♣ 8 6		
♦ K Q J		
♠ A 8 5 4 2		
♥ 8 5	Y	♥ K Q 9 4
♣ 5 4 2	A      B	♣ K J 9 7
♦ A 10 8 5 4 3	Z	♦ 9 6
♠ 10 3		♠ K Q 7
♥ A 7 6 2		
♣ A Q 10 8		
♦ 7 2		
♠ J 9 6		

Z plays the hand at two no trumps.

A led his fourth best diamond and Y won it with the jack. There is nothing in an ace-jack-ten finesse in a short suit, and the longest suit between the two hands being the spades Z led a small one from dummy, intending to duck it, but B put on the queen and returned the diamond.

A could count the diamonds and having no re-entry thought it best to make his ace while he had the chance. Then he switched to his partner's suit, leading his top heart. Y put on the ten, B played the queen and Z let him have it so as to get the tenace over him with ace and jack.

This drove B to the clubs, leading the nine to cover dummy's eight. Z inferred that A had nothing as good as a king or he would have cleared his diamonds, so he finessed the club queen. Then he led the jack of spades and ducked it so as to put B in difficulties again.

B led one of his two equals in clubs and Z won it with the ace and led his last spade, which Y won with the ace. Y made the rest of the spades, Z counting the discards carefully. Then Y led the king of diamonds, working out the dregs of the suits just as one does in a bridge problem.

What is B to discard? Z had left in his hand the ace and seven of hearts and the ten of clubs. B holds the best club and the king of hearts guarded. Three by cards and the game for Z, no matter what B does.

Of course the adversaries sometimes have something to say about the declarer making his long suits in this way and there are many opportunities for the defence to block suits and to get tricks in their own if they can count cards well. Take this case:

♥ 10 8 3			
♣ 4 2			
♦ 6 3			
♠ J 9 8 6 5 2			
♥ 9 7 2	Y		♥ A K 6 5 4
♣ J 6 5	A	B	♣ K 10 7 3
♦ A J 7 5			♦ 10 9 2
♠ K 7 4	Z		♠ 10
♥ Q J			
♣ A Q 9 8			
♦ K Q 8 4			
♠ A Q 3			

Z bid no trumps and all passed, B not feeling equal to two in hearts. A opened with his smallest diamond and Z false carded the king, which did not deceive A for a minute, because he knew B would not play the

nine if he held the eight nor the ten if he held the queen. The value of this inference will be seen presently.

Z started out with the spades, but A held off until the third round, B discarding a heart and a club. A led a heart, as B discards from strength, and B won it with the king. When B led the ten of diamonds Z covered with the imperfect fourchette, the nine being played, and A won with the ace. Another heart from A, to see if B has a small diamond to lead through, and A makes his major tenace over Z.

A cannot lead another heart, as that would let in all the spades, dummy's ten being high, so he tries the jack of clubs. Z cannot tell how the clubs lie, and as B may have four left he lets the jack win, knowing A must lead another club. This A does, killing his partner's king, but they set the contract for one trick by the play in the diamond and heart suits and holding up the command of spades until Z had no more to lead.

## XXX

### RE-ENTRY CARDS

As every good player knows to his sorrow there are many good suits which have to go into the discard simply because there is no way of bringing them into play. All the science of finesse, of unblocking and of ducking goes for nothing if the hand that holds the long end of the suit cannot get into the lead and make it.

The foresight which is necessary in order to make certain cards good for re-entry makes this part of the game particularly difficult for the beginner. Among the average run of players there are very few who can plan a hand far enough ahead to see how two entirely different ends must be reached, to clear up or establish a suit and to bring it into play.

Not infrequently the position will present a double problem, because there may be a question as to the possibility of establishing the suit at all and of how to do it. Unless the suit can be established there is no use for re-entries to bring it in. They may be needed to place the lead for a finesse, which may not gain anything after all, but their chief use is to bring in long suits, suits that are essential to the fulfilment of the contract or the winning of the game.

The interesting hands to play are those in which the double problem presents itself; the strategy in clearing up the suit and the tactics employed in making a re-

entry that will bring it in after it is established. Here is a hand that illustrates in its simplest form the manner in which such situations should be handled:

♥ A K Q 9 8 2		
♣ A J 4		
♦ 5		
♠ 9 4 2		
♥ J 10	Y	♥ 7 4
♣ K Q 10	A B	♣ 8 6
♦ J 9 7 2	Z	♦ K Q 10 6 4 3
♠ A Q 8 6		♠ 10 7 3
♥ 6 5 3		
♣ 9 7 5 3 2		
♦ A 8		
♠ K J 5		

Y plays the hand at four hearts, doubled by A.

When B led the king of diamonds Y looked over the situation. In order to make his contract he sees that he must win with all his trumps and either win three club tricks or two clubs and a spade. The spade is very problematical and the clubs depend upon the position of the king, queen, ten and how long the adversaries can hold up the command. The first thing then is to find out how the clubs lie, at the same time keeping in mind the necessity for a re-entry in Z's hand, as his ace of diamonds is gone on the first trick.

A small club from Z brought the queen from A and Y let him hold it, because if the cards lie well Y may clear up all the clubs in two leads later. If he takes the queen he can get only one lead.

A returns the jack of his partner's suit and Y trumps it with the eight, his eye being still on the possible re-entry. The ace of clubs dropped the ten and left the king alone against the suit. Now comes the point of the hand, which is to find out if it is worth while to establish the club suit or if it would be better to try a finesse in the spades. If both adversaries follow suit to two rounds of trumps Z's six is a re-entry for the clubs, while the spade trick is doubtful.

When two rounds of trumps drop them all from the A and B hands Y leads the jack of clubs, putting A in. Now it does not matter what A leads, because he must either come up to the spade king or let Y ruff another diamond and lead the deuce of trumps to Z. Having tenace in spades, A avoided that suit and led the diamond. Y trumped with the nine, put Z in and discarded two losing spades on the two winning clubs, losing a spade trick at the end but making his contract at double rates and winning the game.

In this hand the re-entry was there from the start, all it needed was uncovering. But like the sculptor who told an admiring friend that the lamb he was at work on was there all the time and he was only taking the marble from around it, the player must have the imagination to see these re-entry cards and get the other cards from around them. Y kept the small trump in his own hand so as to be able to put Z in at the right time, ruffing with the higher ones.

But there are many hands in which re-entries must be made by getting the high cards from around them when those high cards are in the hands of the adver-

saries, which is not as easy as getting them out of your own hand. Here is a very good example of making re-entries in the suit itself, which is given by Elwell:

♥ K 10 9 8 6 5		
♣ 10 6		
♦ 8 6 4		
♠ 5 4		
♥ Q J 7 2	Y	♥ .....
♣ 5 4 2	A B	♣ A J 9 7 3
♦ K 10 5	Z	♦ Q J 3
♠ 9 8 3		♠ K J 10 6 2
♥ A 4 3		
♣ K Q 8		
♦ A 9 7 2		
♠ A Q 7		

Z dealt and bid no trumps. A led his fourth best heart, dummy played the five and B started a reverse discard with the seven of clubs.

Look over the two hands and there is nothing much in them, after all. Five tricks are sure, and two more are possible if the ace of clubs lies to the right and the spade finesse holds. But Z wants to win the game.

This can be done only by making up the heart suit, for which there is no re-entry in Y's hand, and the only way to clear that suit and also to bring it in is to tempt the adversaries to make a mistake. If they are too sharp for you the suit cannot be made nor the game won, but it is always worth trying.

Z overtakes his dummy's five of hearts with the ace and at once returns the suit. If A makes the mistake

of covering with one of his two equals he is lost, as Z can let him hold the trick and upon getting in on anything A may lead can come through him again with his remaining heart, giving Y the tenace over A, with king and ten over queen and seven. Of course, if A is a shrewd player and stops to figure out the situation he will play small, and then Z will be unable to clear the suit, no matter what he does.

But it is not always possible to catch the opponents in as difficult a situation as this, and the declarer sometimes has a hard time establishing his re-entries when the object of his play is comparatively transparent. Take this case:

♥ J 8 7 5			
♣ .....			
♦ Q J 8 7 6			
♠ J 10 5 2			
♥ K 9 2	Y	♥ 10 6 4	
♣ K 9 8 6 5	A B	♣ J 4 3	
♦ A 5 2	Z	♦ 10 9 4 3	
♠ 7 4		♠ K 9 6	
♥ A Q 3			
♣ A Q 10 7 2			
♦ K			
♠ A Q 8 3			

Z bid no trumps, every one passed and A led the six of clubs. Upon looking over his resources carefully Z made up his mind to keep all his spades for re-entry purposes and to discard a heart, winning the jack of clubs with the queen on the first trick.

Z then led the king of diamonds, knowing very well that they would not put the ace on it, as they could see

it would clear up the suit for the dummy at once. Having no more diamonds to lead, it becomes necessary to have two re-entries in Y's hand, one to clear the diamond suit and one to bring it in. This is easy if the king of spades is gotten out of the way, so Z leads the ace and then the queen, so as to make dummy's jack and ten both good for re-entry cards.

This time it is B that holds off, refusing to win the queen of spades. Seeing that the spade suit will not accomplish his purpose, Z gives up that part of his scheme and leads a small heart, because if he can put dummy in with the jack one spade will be enough. If he cannot the diamond suit is dead.

A could have spoiled Z's game by putting on the king and leading another heart, but of course he does not know that Z would be obliged to win it and he does not like the idea of taking this trick and leading a club right up to the ace and ten, which are marked in Z's hand.

The moment the jack of hearts holds the trick Y leads the queen of diamonds and Z discards a club. A can count his partner's diamonds and must win this trick to make the ten good. After playing the ace he leads the five right back, so as to get a club from B.

Y does not attempt to win this trick, but lets it go to B, because if Y played a high diamond and then led another round to clear the suit it would force Z to a very awkward discard and show B to lead a heart. This is a point which the beginner too often overlooks, forcing himself to inconvenient discards.

B came through the ace and ten of clubs in Z's hand

as A hoped he would, but Z let the king win. A led a third round to get the lone ace out of his way and then Z led the spade, putting B in. When B led the heart Z put the ace right on, led the fourth spade and made his jack of diamonds, which gave him just three by cards and the game.

Two re-entries are often wanted, sometimes for one purpose and sometimes for another. When two such cards are necessary to the success of the carrying out of the play of the hand as planned it is clearly useless to play the hand on those lines unless the two re-entries are there to carry the scheme through. When possible it is better to find out about these re-entries first, but there are many cases in which they are taken for granted if the cards are distributed in certain ways.

For instance it is almost an axiom that if you have four cards of any suit in each hand, even if there is only one high card on one side of the table, you can always re-enter twice with the weaker hand. Here is a practical example of this important principle:

♥ 8 7 5 4 3 2	
♣ 5 2	
♦ 8	
♠ Q 7 4 2	
♥ J 9	Y
♣ K Q 10 7 4	A B
♦ A 5 4 3	Z
♠ J 6	
	♥ K 6
	♣ 9 8 6
	♦ Q J 10 9 6
	♠ 9 8 3
♥ A Q 10	
♣ A J 3	
♦ K 7 2	
♠ A K 10 5	

This hand is played by Z; who finally bids two no trumps.

A leads the club king, B plays the eight and Z holds off, so as to retain the tenace, ace jack, over the queen, which is better than playing the ace at once, as B might get in and lead through the jack. A continues with the seven, B plays the nine and Z wins with the jack.

There is not enough in the spade suit to go game, so Z turns his attention to the hearts. The first possibility is a finesse and the second is that the suit may be all brought in if the finesse holds. But this requires two re-entries in Y's hand, as Z has the heart suit blocked even if the finesse wins. The spade suit holds the possibility of this double re-entry, as there are four in each hand.

Z leads the ten of spades, not the five, and wins it with the queen, no matter what A plays. A small heart from Y and Z finesse the queen, leads the ace and drops the king and jack; then he makes the ten, so as to be out of the way. By leading ace and king of spades Z now makes Y's seven a re-entry, Z having kept the five, so as soon as he finds the spades all fall on his ace and king he makes his ace of clubs while he is in the lead—another thing beginners too often overlook—puts dummy in with the spade and runs off the hearts, making a little slam.

The beginner should be careful to look over the hand for the possibility of wanting re-entries before he plays to the first trick. Sometimes it is then or never. Take this case:

♥ A K 3		
♦ Q 10 4 3 2		
♦ A Q		
♦ A J 6		
♥ 7 5 2	Y	♥ J 9 8 6 4
♦ A K	A B	♦ J 9 7 5
♦ 9 8 5		♦ K 3
♦ K 10 9 5 3	Z	♦ Q 8
♥ Q 10		
♦ 8 6		
♦ J 10 7 6 4 2		
♦ 7 4 2		

Y plays the hand on a winning bid of two no trumps. B led his fourth best heart, Z played the ten, A the five, and Y carelessly dropped the three and lost the odd trick and his contract, because B eventually cleared his hearts, leading them every time A or B got in, made the jack of clubs, the king of diamonds and the queen of spades, while his partner made two club tricks.

Had Y studied the situation a moment before playing to the first trick he would have seen that all the diamonds but the king could be made if dummy had one re-entry. Y could have made this re-entry by overtaking his own trick with the king of hearts, keeping the three to lead to Z's queen.

There is no use trying to get any finesse in the diamonds, the thing being to clear them at once, before Z has that re-entry heart taken out of his hand, so Y should lead the ace and queen, which would have forced the king.

A and B might lead anything they liked after that.

If they shifted to clubs they would simply make the queen in Y's hand good for an extra trick. If they led spades Y holds off with his tenace and makes both ace and jack. If B goes right along with his own suit, hoping that Y cannot let Z's queen hold, as he did not let the ten hold, Z makes all the diamonds and all that Y needs is his ace of spades and ace of hearts to go game.

## XXXI

### THE ECHO

Among the many conventions which are generally known and talked of but little understood in the refinement of their use there are two that stand out prominently from the rest. These are the down-and-out echo against a trump declaration and the eleven rule at no trumps.

Almost any auction player will tell you that he knows the eleven rule and a great many ladies profess to know it, but not one person in a hundred understands the refinements of its application. The same is true, although in less degree, of the down-and-out echo.

The average player has a general idea that following suit with an unnecessarily high card means that when the lower card falls you have no more of the suit and are ready to ruff it on the third round; but the negative inferences from the absence of the echo and the positive inferences as to the distribution of the suit, even before the echo can be completed, seem to be quite beyond any but the most expert.

The straight rule upon which all inferences from it are based is that if you are playing against a declared trump and make no attempt to win the trick while following suit you should play the higher of only two cards, provided neither is as high as the jack. Some authorities restrict the use of the echo to the partner's leads and one or two restrict it even further, advising

the player to reserve it for the king lead, because when a player leads a king he shows either ace or queen or both. Whichever it may be he will win the second round of the suit, if not the first, and will be in the lead when the echo is completed.

Suppose the player on your left is the declarer of a trump suit, let us say hearts, and your partner leads the king of spades. If you hold the six and four only you should play the six to the first lead and drop the smaller card on the second round. This will complete the echo.

If either of your two cards is as high as the jack the echo is not only unnecessary but is misleading. Holding jack and four, if you play the four first, when your jack falls your partner will know that you have the queen or no more and can win the third round. But if you play the jack first he will read you for the queen or no more and may lead a small card so as to let you trump or make your queen, only to find that you still have a small card.

Simple as the rule seems, it will be found in practice that the uses of the echo are many and various and some of the prettiest plays in auction are based on correct inference from the presence or absence of the down and out echo. Here is a good example of what might be called a straight echo, with no frills to it:

♥ J 4 3	
♦ 9 7 6 3	
◆ 9 4	
♠ A K 8 5	
♥ K Q 10 9 6	Y
♦ K	A
◆ A 10 7	B
♠ Q 10 9 4	Z
♥ 7 5	
♦ 9 5 4 2	
◆ J 6 5 3	
♠ J 7 2	
♥ A 8 2	
♦ A Q J 10	
◆ K Q 8 2	
♠ 6 3	

The score being love all, Z started with one no trump and A called two hearts, which Y and B passed. Z doubled the two hearts. Y opened his hand on general principles, as his partner had not named any suit, leading the king of spades and following with the ace, which denied the queen.

On these two tricks Z echoed by playing first the six and then the trey of spades, showing that he was out of that suit and could ruff a third round if Y thought it advisable. Y led a third spade and Z trumped it, leading the king of diamonds from his own hand.

A won the diamond with the ace and Y dropped the nine. When A led the trump, Z won it and led his established queen of diamonds, on which Y's four fell, completing an echo in that suit. Another diamond from Z is trumped by Y and another spade from Y is ruffed by Z. The fourth round of diamonds is either overtrumped by Y, or Y's jack becomes the best trump and good for a trick, after which the king of clubs falls to the ace and the contract is set for 400 points.

This is the echo in its simplest form and its meaning is unequivocal, but some writers recommend extending it to cover any method of winning the third round, so that they echo with three to the queen as well as with only two of the suit. This is not the simon pure echo, because the player is not always out of the suit and one of its chief uses, the negative inferences from it, is lost, because there is no relying on inferences based on a play that may mean either of two distinct things, no more of the suit or three to the queen.

While it is very seldom that this makes any difference in the result of the play it may, and every now and then it puts the partner in doubt and makes it hard for him to choose the safe course, as in the following hand:

♥ J 9 4			
♣ 9 5 3			
♦ Q 9 3			
♠ 9 8 6 3			
♥ 8 6	Y	♥ A K Q 7 3 2	
♣ 8 7 4	A B	♣ K J 6 2	
♦ J 7 4	Z	♦ 8 6	
♠ A Q J 10 2		♠ K	
♥ 10 5			
♣ A Q 10			
♦ A K 10 5 2			
♠ 7 5 4			

The winning bid is two hearts, and B plays the hand.

Z led the king of diamonds and followed with the ace, Y playing the nine and trey. Z supposed that Y was playing the regulation down-and-out echo and

could ruff the third round, so he led another diamond, and it cost him five by cards and the rubber.

B trumped the third diamond, drew all the trumps and led the king of spades, overtaking it with the ace, and on dummy's five good spades he discarded all his clubs, winning five by cards.

Had Z known that Y had still another diamond and that B would ruff he would have shifted and led a spade through dummy's strength on the chance that his partner had the king and could exhaust B. Let this be the play and even if dummy puts on the ace and gives B two discards Z must make two clubs at the end or a club and a trump, either of which would save the game.

One of the beauties of the down-and-out echo is in the inferences which spring from it, and the skill with which some persons can place the suit with the assistance of this echo is astonishing to one who has not studied its possibilities. Here is a good example of how it works out sometimes:

♥ 10 8 6		
♦ 3		
◆ A K 10 8 2		
♠ Q 7 5 2		
♥ A Q J 7 2	Y	♥ K 5
♦ 8 7	A	♦ Q J 10 4
◆ 9 7	B	♦ Q J 6 5 4
♠ 10 9 8 4	Z	♠ A 6
♥ 9 4 3		
♦ A K 9 6 5 2		
◆ 3		
♠ K J 3		

The score was 24 to 0 in favor of A and B on the rubber game. Z dealt and called two clubs, and A went two in hearts. Y would not risk three in diamonds, and B, with his potential no-trumper, thought a heart would be the safer road to the game, so he passed, and it was Y's lead.

Y led the king of diamonds to show the sure trick in that suit before leading his singleton club. The moment the trey fell from Z's hand Y knew Z had no more, in spite of A's false carding the nine, because if Z had held the trey and seven he would have played the seven first. Seeing this, Y held up the command of the diamonds and led a little one for Z to trump.

Z in his turn led the king of clubs and although A false carded on this suit also Z knew that Y had no more, so he led a small one for the second round and let Y ruff it. In this manner both Y and Z kept command of dummy's long suits.

When Y led a third diamond A overtrumped Z, led the ace and another trump and then led the ace and another spade from B's hand. Z won the second spade with the jack, made his king and then forced with the clubs, so that A had to lose a spade trick in the end, as Z had his hand counted down for four spades and the contract was set for two tricks.

Let Y make his two winning diamonds and Z his two winning clubs and A will get three by cards on the hand, because A will shut off the ruff in the third round of either suit and the ace of spades will bring in three winning cards in B's hand.

One form of the down-and-out echo with which

some players are not familiar is in winning tricks with higher cards than necessary. If a player wins the first trick with the ace and returns the king it should mean no more. In the same way winning with the king and returning the queen ought to show the player was out of the suit, but unfortunately so many players win tricks with any card that they think will do it and so many have that old "third hand high" maxim still in their heads that it is hard to depend on any such inferences.

The lead of an ace before a king is always a sign that the leader is out of the suit if he be a good player and has been a conventional lead since the early days of straight whist.

Whether this down-and-out echo is used as a straight invitation to a ruff or as a means toward the location of the cards in a suit it is unquestionably a strong weapon in the hands of a good player.

## XXXII

### THE RULE OF ELEVEN

There has always been more or less difference of opinion as to the value of the eleven rule in a game like auction, where there is an exposed hand. When bridge first came out Fisher Ames, who used to write controversial articles on whist, took the ground that the eleven rule was of more value to the dealer than to his adversaries, because he could take full advantage of it in his defensive second hand play.

But as the eleven rule is based on the lead of the fourth best card, this argument is equally true of any of the conventional leads. The dealer knows that the 10 is led from K J 10 and can place the A and Q. He knows that in a no-trumper the K is led only from three honors, K Q J or K Q 10, so he can place the A J or the A 10 if a small card follows the king led. The same is true of every conventional high card lead.

It all comes down to the old story, the adversaries giving each other information in a language that is perfectly understood by the declarer; to which there is always the old answer, that if the adversaries did not give each other any such information they would both be completely in the dark, while the declarer would always know that what was not in his own hand or the dummy's was against him.

Many widely varying and inaccurate accounts have been written about the origin of the eleven rule, and

various persons have been put forward as its inventor. As the facts are frequently asked for and as there is no convention so often referred to at the card table as this eleven rule, it may not be out of place to give its history here.

In the early '80s a little whist coterie met at one another's houses in Baltimore to study the scientific aspects of the game. One of these was E. C. Howell, now widely known as the inventor of the Howell Pair System, used at all the big tournaments. Another was Thomas Whelan, who has since played on many a championship team in the matches for the A. W. L. trophies. A third was R. F. Foster, the author of this work. And the fourth man in the rubber was usually one of three doctors, Wanstall, Conlin or Walls.

These players were so impressed by the value of Whelan's technical knowledge of the leads and second hand plays that they all fell to studying them. Howell spent a great deal of time in trying out inferences, to see how many cards could be placed for the last five tricks, a system which was afterward adopted by the American Whist Club of Boston as a training exercise for their players and which was a large factor in their success in winning matches against all comers.

Foster turned his attention to the small card leads and the inferences from them, and upon the wall of his room was hung a long strip of paper upon which was pasted all the combinations of cards that could be held against a player who led any card that was not one of the regular high card combinations.

As all the high card leads were started with the

A K Q J or 10, any smaller card followed Drayson's rule of the penultimate or antepenultimate, afterward christened by Trist "the fourth-best." The first inference from this invariable lead of the fourth-best was that the deuce always indicated exactly four in suit in the leader's hand and no combination from which a high card would be led. Higher cards limited the number led from in less degree, but it was when the intermediate cards were reached that the eleven rule developed, and many authorities to-day advise one not to bother with it on any card below a seven.

When the higher cards that must be out against the leader were posted on the wall opposite the leads of such cards as the 7, 8 and 9, the high cards in the leader's hand were limited, or they would come under the regular high card leads. For instance, here are a few of the suits from which the eight would invariably be led as a fourth best by any good player:

- 8 led from Q J 9 8 4, leaves A K 10.
- 8 led from K J 9 8 5, leaves A Q 10.
- 8 led from A J 9 8 6, leaves K Q 10.
- 8 led from A 10 9 8 3, leaves K Q J.
- 8 led from K 10 9 8 2, leaves A Q J.
- 8 led from Q 10 9 8 5, leaves A K J.

This process was worked out for every possible lead of a 7, 6 and 5, and the thing that immediately impressed Foster was that the number of cards higher than the one led, not in the leader's hand, was always the same.

When an 8 was led there were always three higher

cards against the leader; when a 7 was led there were always four and when a 6 was led, always five. In other words the difference between the number of spots on the card led and the number of cards higher than the one led, which were not in the leader's hand, was always the difference between the number of spots on the card led and 11.

The reason that this must be invariably true can be proved by assuming that there are no high card leads and that the fourth best must be led from all suits. If we number the cards on up beyond the 10 we get 11 for the jack, 12 for the queen, 13 for the king and 14 for the ace, in this order:

No.	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Card	A	K	Q	J	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2

If the leader held all the highest cards in the suit and led his fourth best it would be the jack, or No. 11, and as 11 from 11 leaves nothing, there are no higher cards than the jack out against him. Take away any two of the honors and his fourth best will be the 9, which from 11 leaves 2, the number of the honors you have taken away, and so on for as many cards as you like to take from the leader's hand.

From this was evolved the rule, "If the spots on the card led are deducted from eleven it will always show how many cards higher than the one led are out against the leader."

When the rule was explained to "Cavendish," card editor of the London *Field*, he saw its value at once, and when it was finally given to the public in "Foster's

Whist Manual," in 1890, it was adopted by whist players all over the world, and is now given in every textbook on whist, bridge or auction, as one of the standard conventions of the game.

When the declarer is alive to the importance of this rule and his adversaries are not, he naturally gets the best of it, but he must always play on the assumption that they know as much as he does. Take this hand:

♥ J 8 6 3			
♦ 9 8 4			
♦ 9 8			
♠ 10 9 3 2			
♥ K Q 9 7 2	Y	♥ A 10 4	
♦ 10 5 3	A	♦ K 2	
♦ 10 4 2	B	♦ K Q J 7 6	
♦ Q 4	Z	♦ J 8 7	
♥ 5			
♦ A Q J 7 6			
♦ A 5 3			
♦ A K 6 5			

Z dealt and bid no trumps at once. All passed, B imagining that he had a better chance to set the contract than to accomplish anything in diamonds.

A led the seven of hearts. Z figured by the eleven rule that as there were  $11 - 7 = 4$  higher out against the leader. B had two of them, as dummy had but two higher than the 7, and if third hand had a smaller card he would duck the 7 unless dummy covered it, so Z put on the 8 from Y's hand, not that he can accomplish much by it, as all the hearts must make, but it is a good habit to cover this way.

But B did not know anything about the eleven rule, and instead of playing the 10, which was a sure winner, he put on the ace, and as he saw dummy had the hearts stopped he thought it best to clear his own suit, as he still had a good re-entry card in the king of clubs.

Z passed two rounds of the diamonds, as to exhaust A, discarding a club from Y's hand. Then he led the ace of spades, but upon catching nothing better than the 4 and 7, he determined to try his luck with an underplay.

Instead of going on with the king of spades he led the small one, hoping to find the higher ones with A, who had no diamonds to lead to B. This plan worked, as A won the trick with the queen and proceeded to make his king and queen of hearts, upon which Z discarded the king and six of spades, so as not to be put into the lead on that suit.

A put dummy in with a heart, as Z foresaw that he would, and B had to let go one of his diamonds in order to keep his jack of spades and his guarded club king. This enabled Z to count his hand, and Y led a club through, took the finesse of the jack, caught the king and made the odd trick, which was all he had bid to make.

B's ignorance of the eleven rule cost him 110 points. If he had counted the spots on his partner's card and played the ten of hearts, returning the ace and following it with the four, he could have kept his guarded club and his three to the jack in spades, making a reverse discard in diamonds with the seven and six.

This would have enabled A to make all his hearts

and then to have come along with a diamond. Whether Z won the first diamond trick or the second or the third would not matter then, as B must make the king of clubs or the jack of spades. This would have meant five heart tricks, two tricks in diamonds and one in a black suit, eight tricks against a contract to make seven, or 100 points gained in penalties.

A rather curious hand came up recently in which one player held seven diamonds to the A J 10 and four hearts to the A 10, singleton club and spade. The dealer on his left had bid a club, showing a sure trick in that suit, and his partner had gone as high as three no trumps over the four diamonds, because he held the king and queen of diamonds, with seven clubs to the king queen jack and the ace king and other spades, but no hearts.

Knowing he was up against something unusually strong, and that his diamond suit was stopped, the leader did not open that suit at all, but started with the four of hearts. Dummy laid down the Q 9 8 3, and the declarer, imagining the object of the lead was simply to get a diamond through, which did not bother him at all with his king queen of that suit, played a small heart second hand, the trey.

Imagine his astonishment when the third hand dropped the deuce under it and the four held the trick. The ace and ten of hearts followed, and the king jack seven all scored on the right. Then the diamond came through and the declaration went down for two tricks.

Had the declarer been a little more careful and applied the eleven rule to the first lead, instead of taking

it for granted that it was only to get a lead through him, he would have put on the eight, forcing the jack and leaving the queen nine in dummy as tenace over the ten if that were led through him.

This would have kept the possibilities of the heart suit down to three tricks, which with the ace of diamonds would not have saved the game even, to say nothing about defeating the declaration.

## XXXIII

### PLAY OF THE SECOND HAND

“The last thing that the self-taught player learns,” says a well-known writer, “is the exceptions to the old rule of second hand low.” The rule alluded to, which is a relic from the days of bumblepuppy, “second hand low; third hand high,” is simply a tradition, a maxim which is nowhere to be found in the text-books, even though the whole sixty-eight standard works that have been published on whist should be searched for it.

In the rules for the proper play of certain combinations of cards as laid down by the original “Hoyle,” whose book was published in 1742, the first twenty pages or so are taken up with the leads, then come two pages of discards by the second hand. In Chapter X he gives the rules for playing singly guarded honors second hand, but the positions are of no interest to the auction player with an exposed hand on the table. Further on a few remarks about two honors in sequence with only one small card, and that is all there is about second hand play from the father of whist tactics.

“Cavendish,” writing 150 years later, analyzed all the combinations that might be held at second hand, using the old system, which was to give the rule first and then the exception right after it, with the natural result that the beginner on sitting down to the card table without the book did not always recollect which was the rule and which was the exception. Walker, in his little

handbook, "The Correct Card," gives the same thing in the same way, as if the play of the second hand were a separate part of the game to be learned by itself.

In the "Whist Manual," first published in 1890, the modern system of teaching was followed, giving the rule and leaving the exceptions to be found out by experience. The fundamental principle of second hand play was set down this way:

"When you hold any combination from which you would lead a high card you should play a high card second hand from that combination if you hold it over a small card led through you." This enabled any one who had learned the leads to play second hand correctly without any further study.

While this was written for whist, it will be found applicable to almost every situation in auction. The player with dummy on his left needs no rule, because he can see what is behind him if he is led through; but the one with dummy on his right must understand second hand play in order to protect himself.

The declarer must be very careful about his second hand tactics if he is led through and dummy has no protection in the suit. Dummy's cards must be played on the same principle if it is the concealed hand that is weak. The advantage to be taken of the eleven rule in such cases has been explained.

The only exceptions to the usual rule of high card combinations led through are the obvious cases in which dummy and the declarer may hold between them the cards that go to make up a combination which would come under the rule only if it were all in one

hand. In such a case the usual second hand play is unnecessary. With A K Q small in one hand the rule requires the high card second hand on a small card led; but if the A Q small are in one hand and the K in the other the high card second hand is quite unnecessary.

There are two mistakes that are continually made by the beginner and the self-taught player in second hand tactics, both of which errors are likely to prove expensive upon occasion, and either of which would be avoided if he kept before him the simple fundamental rule for second hand play already quoted.

The first mistake, and probably the more common, is the failure to distinguish between suits of three cards and those of four, when they are headed by two honors in sequence. Take, for example, queen and jack. If there is only one small card one of the honors must fall to the ace or king, so it should be put on or both may be lost. With two small cards this does not follow, as the ace and king may leave the queen and jack both good for tricks.

Test this combination by the rule. If you had only three cards, queen jack and small, and were to lead that suit you would begin with a high card. Then play a high card second hand on a small card led through you. If you lead from four of the suit without the ten or nine, you do not lead the queen or jack, but the fourth best. Therefore play the small card second hand. The beginner is continually covering second hand just because he has two honors in sequence, regardless of the number of the small cards with the queen and jack.

Here is a hand that the writer saw played under the

old count which shows the consequences that may flow from this apparently trivial mistake:

♥ 7 6 3		
♣ Q J 8 2		
♦ 9 4		
♠ 10 9 3 2		
♥ 9 8 2	Y	♥ J 10 5 4
♣ 10 9 7 6 5	A B	♣ A K 4 3
♦ A Q 7 6 5	Z	♦ J 3
♠ .....		♠ 8 6 4
♥ A K Q		
♣ .....		
♦ K 10 8 2		
♠ A K Q J 7 5		

Z dealt and bid no trump, which A overcalled with two in diamonds. The others passing, Z went two no trumps, as he had the diamonds securely stopped.

A did not lead the diamond, as he knew Z must have the king guarded, if not king and jack, so he tried to get B into the lead to come through Z. He selected the club suit, leading the fourth best, because it could not be the declarer's long suit and would force Z to open something else up to B.

The declarer, who was not up on the fine points of second hand play, put on the jack. B won the trick with the king and at once responded to his partner's diamond declaration by leading the jack through Z, who had discarded a small diamond on the club trick.

Z covered the jack with the king, so as to make the ten good for a trick, dummy having the nine. A won

with the ace and led the ten and nine of clubs through Y. The declarer refused to cover with the queen, hoping B would be compelled to win the trick or block his partner's suit, Z discarding spades.

After winning the fourth round of clubs B came through with his remaining diamond and A won with the queen, making a trick with his fifth club and setting the contract for two tricks.

This was a clear loss of 136 points and the game, which is supposed to be worth 125 more, and it is all due to bad second hand play. On the opening lead of a club the declarer should have inferred by the eleven rule that B held two cards higher than the six, as dummy has only three higher and the declarer himself has none. In order to prevent B from ducking the trick Y should have put on the eight, so as just to cover the six, but never the jack or queen.

Let B win this trick and lead the diamond through and A is in, but Y has the club suit stopped. No matter what club A leads Y has the second and third best, and by playing one second hand, just as he would lead one if he were leading the suit, he is sure of the trick on that round or the next. B can win the second round of clubs and give A another diamond, but there they die, as the declarer must make every other trick no matter what A leads, three by cards and the game.

Another very common mistake, which one may see any day, is the failure to distinguish between combinations at second hand which are supported by the fourth hand and those which are not. Take the everyday case of queen and one small second hand; a small card led

through. If there is nothing but the ace and small cards in the fourth hand the best chance for two tricks in the suit is to put up the queen, because if it is not played almost anything will force the ace and the queen must fall to the king next time, leaving the jack and ten still good against the declarer.

But if the ten or jack is in the same hand with the ace to play the queen second hand is to give up the certainty of two tricks in the suit no matter how the cards lie. While it is true that the queen may hold the trick if it is put on, it is also true that if it does not hold the trick it is thrown away if the ten is the highest card in the hand with the ace. Take this case:

♥ K 8 2			
♦ Q 5			
♦ 10 5			
♠ Q J 9 6 4 3			
♥ J 7	Y	♥ A 10 9 5 3	
♣ J 9 7 6 3 2	A B	♣ K 8	
♦ 8 3	Z	♦ Q J 7 6 2	
♠ A 7 5		♠ 10	
♥ Q 6 4			
♦ A K 9 4			
♠ K 8 2			

Z played the hand on a bid of two no trumps, doubled by A.

A's view of the position is that if his partner is long in both the red suits, as was shown by the bidding, and A is long in the clubs, with the ace of spades on the

side, Z cannot make eight tricks at no-trump before A or B get a suit cleared. Nevertheless, apart from the result, this is a bad double, because it gives the declarer a chance to go game on a fulfilled contract. Had it been a free double the case would have been different.

A did not touch either of his partner's declared suits, but started with the fourth best of his own six-card suit, his idea being to make Z lead B's suits up to B. The declarer, who was not familiar with the principles of second hand play, put on the queen of clubs second hand. B covered with the king and the ace won the trick.

Z opened up the spades, leading the king, but A held off, hoping, from the bidding, that B could kill dummy's re-entry in hearts if Z were exhausted of spades to lead. Y won the second spade trick with the jack and then forced the ace. On these two tricks B started a reverse in diamonds by discarding the seven and then let the trey of hearts go.

A led the diamond, keeping his club tenace, and Z let the jack win, so as to be sure of three tricks in the suit with the A K 9. But B did not continue the diamonds, leading the club instead, and the contract failed for three tricks. Had Z won the diamond the result would have been just the same, as B must get in on one of the red suits and A will keep all his clubs.

Had this hand been properly managed Y would have passed the first club lead, and no matter how the cards lie Y and Z must make two tricks in the suit, so that A never gets in after it is cleared. Z would have won B's king with the ace and started the spades, clearing them

before it would be possible for Y to lose his queen of clubs. Then, if A leads the diamond, Y would be careful to play the ten second hand with a view to the future finesse of the nine.

Many tricks are lost through the failure of the second hand to take a chance. In a no-trumper, for instance, suppose a small card is led and dummy has only the queen and one or two small cards, there being no protection at all in the fourth hand, the only play is to put the queen right on. Here is an example of what happens every day:

♥ A K		
♦ 8 4		
◆ A K 8		
♠ J 9 8 6 5 4		
♥ Q J 10 7 6 4	Y	♥ 8 2
♦ J 10	A	♦ A K 9 6 5 2
◆ J 9 6 3 2	B	♦ 10 7 5
♠ .....	Z	♠ 7 3
♥ 9 5 3		
♦ Q 7 3		
◆ Q 4		
♠ A K Q 10 2		

Y got the play on three no trumps.

B led a small club, as he knew his partner had no winning hearts. The declarer played a small club second hand from dummy and six club tricks made, setting the contract for 100 points.

The declarer should have known that the leader cannot have three honors, and almost anything in B's hand

will win the first trick, leaving the king and ace to eat up the queen. In no-trumpers a small card is so often led from ace and king that it pays to take a chance on a queen second hand. If the queen is put on in this case Y and Z make a small slam instead of losing 100 points in penalties.

## XXXIV

### HONOR ON HONOR

"Cover an honor with an honor" is a maxim that one may hear quoted as frequently as any other at the card table. "What is the object?" asks the beginner, and the answer is usually about the same thing. "To make your opponents play two honors to win one trick."

Under the impression that he has learned something new and valuable in the line of second hand play the beginner forthwith proceeds to put aces on jacks, kings on tens and queens on both without any regard to the probable object of the lead or the possibilities of his partner's hand. The only thing that gives him pause is the cards in the dummy, and as a rule they are the very things that should not deter him from covering an honor with an honor.

In auction very definite rules can be laid down for the second hand in the matter of covering honors led. These rules apply especially to the person who sits on the right of the declarer when dummy leads through him and also to the play of the declarer and his dummy when those hands are led through. The player with the dummy on his left should have a much easier task, as he knows exactly what is behind him, although he cannot tell what the dealer is leading from. In spite of this fact it is in this very position that most of the bad second hand play occurs, chiefly because the cards in the dummy frighten the beginner.

An excellent rule in auction for the second hand is to cover an honor with an honor only when your honor is lost in any case and the play may make an inferior card good in your partner's hand. As a rule, good players do not give their opponents an opportunity to force the sacrifice of two honors to win one trick if they can help it, but occasionally the declarer is driven to lead suits that he would rather let alone, and if the second hand play is not sound, he may slip in a trick or two that he is not entitled to.

It is well known to good players, for example, that it is useless to lead a queen to an ace-jack suit without the ten, because the queen is simply thrown away if it is led against good players. If the king is second hand it will cover the queen to make the ten good. If it is fourth hand it will win the queen. The proper play is to lead to the queen instead of to the ace.

But the declarer cannot always arrange the lead to suit himself and he may be compelled to lead to the ace, in which case he must either lead the queen or block himself by leading a small card from queen and one.

When such a lead is made, the second hand must put the king on the queen, if he holds it, even if he sees from dummy's cards that his king is lost. Failure to cover in such cases is one of the commonest and most expensive errors in the game, and the importance of covering second hand in such cases is worth impressing upon the beginner at some length. Take this case:

♥ A J 8 3		
♦ Q 9		
♦ A 10		
♠ A K 6 5 3		
♥ Q 10 9	Y	♥ K 7 4
♣ 10 3 2	A      B	♣ K 5 4
♦ Q 6 3	Z	♦ K J 9 8 7 2
♠ J 10 9 7		♠ 2
♥ 6 5 2		
♦ A J 8 7 6		
♦ 5 4		
♠ Q 8 4		

Y wins the declaration and plays the hand at two no trumps.

B led the eight of diamonds and A put on the queen, Y let the suit run two rounds, hoping it might exhaust A's power to lead diamonds. A came back with the six, but as B dropped the deuce Y could not place the trey.

Y can see his contract easily enough if the spades fall, because five spade tricks and three aces will give him two by cards. If the king of clubs is on his left he can just go game by getting two club tricks instead of one, but he dare not risk the club finesse now because it might let in four more diamonds if A has one to lead. This would set the contract, so that the first thing to do is to see if the spades will fall and what cards the big diamond hand discards.

A small spade to dummy's queen and Y wins the second round with the king, only to find B out and discarding the seven of hearts, which B intended as a reverse, to show his re-entry in hearts in case A should

get in. To go on with the spades and then try the finesse in clubs would be to establish a spade in A's hand, which would set the contract for two tricks if the club finesse went wrong, as it would allow A and B to make a club, a spade and five diamonds.

This practically forced Y to lead the clubs from his own hand, so he played the queen. B looked at dummy and saw that his king was a goner if he put it on, so he passed. Dummy played small and the queen held the trick. The nine of clubs followed, the jack held and the ace killed the king and ten. Five club tricks, ace of spades and ace of hearts finished the business, giving Y four by cards and the game.

This is a fair example of what one sees every day, the second hand considering his own cards and dummy and forgetting that he has a partner. If Y holds the ten of clubs with a small one, it does not make the slightest difference what B does with his king, as five club tricks must make. But if Y does not hold the ten it must be in A's hand, and if it is twice guarded B can make it good for a trick by putting his honor on the honor led, leaving dummy only two tricks in clubs instead of five.

If the declarer, Y, has the ten without a small card A must have three to the nine, and that nine will stop the whole club suit if B will only cover the honor with the honor. Study the situation from any view of its possibilities and it must be evident that no matter how the cards lie, nothing can be lost by putting the king on the queen, even when you see the ace and jack on the table waiting to gobble you up.

Had B covered the honor with an honor it would have forced the declarer to let him hold the trick and make his four diamonds, or to overtake with the ace and give A a trick in clubs or spades, or let B make his king of hearts, in each case letting in the diamonds. Y cannot make his contract, no matter what he does if B covers, instead of which B lets him go game on the hand.

The cases in which an honor should be covered are usually those in which there is a possible fourchette between the two hands, as in the case just given, or when there is a fourchette in the second hand itself. A fourchette, it should be explained, is the combination of the cards immediately above and below the card led. If you hold queen and ten and a jack is led through you, you cover with the fourchette, because by playing your queen you leave your ten just as good as the queen, but you transfer the trick to your side instead of leaving it to the jack. If the opponents want it, they will pay two honors for one trick.

An imperfect fourchette is the combination of the card above and the card next but one below the card led. The K 10 is an imperfect fourchette over the Q and it pays to cover the queen when you have a small one with the ten, because the position is precisely the same as covering the queen to make three to the 10 good in your partner's hand. With three to a king it is not necessary to cover, and it is hardly likely that your king can be led through often enough to catch it.

One should always cover with a perfect fourchette,

no matter what is beyond in the dummy. Take this case:

♥ J 5			
♣ A K Q 3			
♦ A Q J			
♠ A K 4 2			
♥ A 7	Y	♥ Q 10 2	
♣ 10 4 2	A	♣ J 9 8 6	
♦ K 10 8 7 3 2	B	♦ 9 5	
♠ J 9	Z	♠ Q 10 8 6	
♥ K 9 8 6 4 3			
♣ 7 5			
♦ 6 4			
♠ 7 5 2			

Z dealt on the rubber game and called a heart, which was a bridge call, not auction, as he had no sure trick in the suit. A bid two diamonds and Y two no trumps. B passed and Z did not overcall, as he should have done with a bust in hearts.

B led the nine of his partner's declared suit and A passed it up, knowing the A Q J must be with Y. The declarer could not see more than two spades, three clubs and two diamonds in the combined hands, which is a trick short of his contract. As everything turns on the fourth club, which is very doubtful, or a trick in hearts, he tried the heart first.

When the jack of hearts is led through B and he sees the king on his left he does not cover with the queen and the jack forces the ace. A could not do better than come back to weakness in clubs. Y put on the queen, led another heart and after making his trick with the

king led through A's diamonds, making both queen and ace, so that he not only got his contract but won the game and rubber.

Had B covered the jack with the fourchette not only would Y and Z never make a heart trick but Y would never get the diamond led through A and his contract would be set for 50 points.

But there are many cases in which a player should not cover an honor with an honor, even when he has an imperfect fourchette. The beginner can distinguish such situations only by considering the object of the lead and the cards that may be in the fourth hand. If the object is to take a finesse and you have the only card to finesse against it is lost. If there are two cards to finesse against and you have one give your partner a chance to make the other.

Here is a hand which shows the consequences of neglecting this principle in play:

♥ 5 4	♦ 9 5 3	♦ 8 7 4
♣ A 10 7 5 3		
♦ 9 5 3		
♣ 8 7 4		
♥ 8	Y	♥ A K Q 9 7 6
♣ Q 9 6 2	A	♣ K
♦ K Q 10 7 6 4	B	♦ 8
♦ 5 3	Z	♣ J 10 9 6 2
♥ J 10 8 2		
♣ J 8 4		
♦ A J 2		
♦ A K Q		

On the rubber game Z dealt and bid no trumps at

once, as he did not care what his partner had. A bid two in diamonds and Y passed. B overcalled A with two hearts to show that he could not support the diamond make. With both these red suits stopped, Z went on to two no trumps and neither adversary felt like going further, as neither could support his partner's declaration.

A led his own suit, the king of diamonds, and Z held off so as to make both ace and jack. A did not see any reason to shift, as B might have the jack and Z might be simply holding the ace to exhaust B, so Z got into the lead with both red suits still stopped.

On counting up his resources the declarer saw that he could make three spade tricks at any time, but no more. There is nothing in hearts unless B leads them or Y can come through him so the whole play of the hand comes down to the club suit, in which there is an A—J—10 finesse.

It would be much better if Y could lead the clubs so that the jack might force either king or queen and leave the ace and ten for a possible finesse over the other honor, but Z cannot get dummy into the lead, so he concludes to start right in by leading the jack and ducking it.

Without stopping to consider the object of the play, A, holding an imperfect fourchette, covered with the queen. Y at once put on the ace and the king fell. By putting Z in the lead with a spade and leading the eight of clubs, which A again covered with the imperfect fourchette, nine and six, Y won the second round with the ten. Once more Z gets in with a spade and leads a

club through, so that Y's major tenace, seven and five hold over A's six and deuce and all five clubs make.

After that there is nothing left for Z but the ace of spades, as he must give up two heart tricks at the end, but in the meantime he has made four by cards and the game.

If the student will lay out the club suit as shown in the hands of A and Y he will find that no matter where the king lies A cannot gain anything by covering the jack with his queen, when he has not the ten also.

Suppose the king is with Z. If A covers Y will win with the ace, lead a small card to Z's king and let Z come through to Y's major tenace, ten and seven over the nine and six, making all the clubs.

If we suppose the king is not with Z, then it must be with B, and if A passes up the jack, as he should have done, Y will have to let the king make or he will have to pay two honors to get one trick by giving up the ace, making A's queen the top. Of course Y was going to pass up the jack, in which case B's king of clubs would have let him make three heart tricks, which would have just saved the game, even if it did not set the contract. As the rubber went with the game this was an expensive error of A's.

The rules for covering smaller honors with the best of the suit, such as putting aces on jacks, and kings on tens, are a separate part of the rather complicated science of second hand play, the rule of covering an honor with an honor not being supposed to refer to any cases but those in which the honor covered and the one covering are in sequence.

## XXXV

### BEATING DUMMY

In the system of communication commonly used by the partners opposed to the declaration at auction, the beginner is instructed to return his partner's suit with a card which is to be selected by one of the following rules:

1. Holding the best card of your partner's suit, lead it, regardless of number.
2. Holding both second and third best, lead one of them, so as to force the command.
3. Holding only two small cards of the suit, lead back the higher.
4. Holding three or more, return the lowest.

But there is another rule which might be added to these, and which should act as a corrective to all of them, but which the text-books almost invariably overlook. This rule is always to beat dummy, regardless of the number of cards you hold.

To this might be added still another rule, which does not readily lend itself to the mechanical game. Do not return your partner's suit at all if you see a chance to give him a possible finesse in another suit.

The application of the last rule depends largely on the individual player's power of inference, because it is not every auction player that knows enough about reading cards to see when he can give his partner a finesse. If he has advanced so far in the game he may

find many opportunities to take advantage of situations in which tricks can be picked up that would escape the average player. Take this case, a hand played at the old count, but which illustrates the point nicely:

♥ A J 7 3	
♣ A K J 10 3	
♦ A Q J	
♠ 7	
♥ 9 4 3	
♣ 6	
♦ K 10 7 6 4 3	
♠ A J 4	
	Y A      B Z
	♥ K Q
	♣ Q 9 4
	♦ 5 2
	♠ Q 10 6 5 3 2
♥ 10 8 6 5	
♣ 8 7 5 2	
♦ 9 8	
♠ K 9 8	

The score was love all and Z was a believer in the fake no-trumper, so he bid it. A being an auction player sat tight, as he saw no chance to make eleven tricks on his cards with diamonds for trumps. Y passed, as the no-trumper suited him, and B also passed.

A led his fourth best diamond, dummy played the jack and led three rounds of clubs, clearing up that suit, A discarding a diamond and a heart and B getting into the lead. It is now up to B to think the situation over and infer what he can before he plays.

If he leads the heart dummy will probably hold off to make both ace and jack and may make several more, as A is discarding hearts. If B leads the diamond he

gives Y two sure tricks without accomplishing anything, as it will not clear A's suit. Turning his attention to Z's hand, although his bid denies a sure trick, he might have had one in spades but not have been strong enough to bid two spades. So he cannot have both ace and king, but he might have one or the other.

Dummy has in sight two more good clubs and one sure trick in each of the red suits. That is seven. If Z holds the ace of spades all he has to do is to get in with it, eight tricks, lead the diamond through A's king and make both ace and queen, nine tricks and the game; Z must have a diamond to lead, as the eleven rule tells B he had originally two higher than the six that A led.

If this is the situation the game is gone no matter what B leads, but if Z had the king of spades and A has the ace B can give A a possible finesse by leading the queen and then A will be able to lead through Y's hearts, making it difficult for Y to make more than one trick in that suit.

Acting on this inference, B led the queen of spades. Z covered it. A played the ace and led back the jack. Then seeing that to shift would let in dummy's clubs he went on with the spades. The six spade tricks and the queen of clubs set the contract.

Had B led a small spade A would have finessed the jack and returned the ace and then a small one probably. The king would have blocked B's suit and have enabled Z to lead the diamond through A, winning the game.

Most of the books will tell you that if you are long

in your partner's declared suit you should begin with the higher of two or three and the lowest of four. Foster's "Advanced Auction" says always lead the highest regardless of number, because auction is a game of aces and kings, not of five card suits.

The continual exception to the rule for varying the lead is that you should always beat dummy if dummy is on your right. Take this case:

♥ K 6 4 3 2			
♣ 10 7 4			
♦ 9 8 5			
♠ 8 4			
♥ A 9	Y	♥ J 5	
♣ K 9 3	A	♣ J 8	
♦ Q J 4 2	B	♦ 10 7 6 3	
♠ A K Q J	Z	♠ 10 7 6 5 2	
♥ Q 10 8 7			
♣ A Q 6 5 2			
♦ A K			
♠ 9 3			

A plays the hand on a bid of one no trump.

Y led the club to his partner's declaration, dummy played small and Z put on the ace. Then instead of leading the lowest of four hearts to his partner's declaration Z was careful to beat dummy and led the queen. A put on the ace at once, as there was apparently no use in passing one round, and made his four winning spades.

On the last two spade leads Z discarded two hearts!

A then led the diamond, and Z made both his diamonds while he was in and then led the heart to his

partner, who made three more tricks in that suit, setting the contract for 50 points.

Now look how this hand goes if Z follows the usual book rule, leading the lowest of four to his partner's declared suit. Z wins the first trick with the ace of clubs and comes back with the seven of hearts. A will pass the small heart and Y will have to put on the king to shut out the jack. Another heart and A is in with the ace to make his four spades. On these Z will have to discard clubs, as every heart he lets go is a trick thrown away, because he cannot clear his clubs in one lead.

When A leads the diamond Z will make his two heart tricks, A and B both discarding diamonds. Now if Z leads a small club B gets in with the jack and makes a spade. If he leads the high club A makes two tricks with the king and nine. No matter what he does all he can get home is the ace of diamonds, so that A just gets his contract and the rubber.

## XXXVI

### THE NULLO DECLARATIONS

The nullo is a contract to lose tricks, and the player bidding it undertakes to win not more than six out of the thirteen, the declaration being always at no trumps.

If he bids one nullo, he means that his opponents will get one trick over the book at no trump in spite of their efforts to present him with as many tricks as they can. Instead of bidding upon what he will make himself, as in the regular game of auction, in nullos he bids on what his adversaries will make; not by their own good play, but by his compelling them to take the tricks.

It will not require more than an hour's experience with the new declarations, provided there is at least one person at the table who knows something of the bidding tactics and play, to convince any person that there is more fun in the nullos than in any other declaration in the game.

While those who have played skat or solo whist or boston have an advantage in their knowledge of the way dangerous suits should be managed, the tactics and the conventions he has learned in those games apply to the single player against two or three opponents. The exposed dummy and the necessity of getting rid of dangerous cards in two hands, which must be played in combination, opens up a new field, which has interests of its own.

It is not as easy to lose tricks as it looks, especially when the other side is trying to give them to you. The taking powers of a five spot are sometimes remarkable in playing nullos, and the way aces and kings can be discarded is rather astonishing to the novice at the game.

But there are a number of fine points in connection with the tactics of playing nullos which are totally foreign to anything the average bridge player is familiar with. It will no longer be a game of aces and kings, but of deuces and treys.

Some writers condemn the nullo as an individual speculation, and suggest that it is not a partnership game, and presents no opportunities for subtlety of inference. That such opinions are based more on imagination and prejudice than on experience must be evident to any one who has played boston, or skat, or solo whist, or nada, or cayenne.

In the first place, there is no declaration which is based so clearly upon the partner's initiative as the nullo. No better evidence of this can be offered than the fact that it is seldom or never necessary to take the partner out of a nullo bid.

One continually sees partners at loggerheads about the ordinary declarations, one insisting on a suit and the other overcalling him with no trumps, or one bidding hearts and the other royals, and neither knowing which is the better bid on the combined hands. One invites a no trumper and the other suggests something else, and then the first one switches to a third declaration. This happens every day.

## XXXVII

### SCORING AT NULLOS

The present rank of the suits in bidding at auction is spades 2, clubs 6, diamonds 7, hearts 8, royal spades 9, nullos 10, and no trumps 10. While the last two are of the same value, the no-trumper will outbid the nullo, no matter which bid is made first. This is a point on which some persons appear to get confused. If A bids a nullo one no-trump will overcall it, although the nullo was bid first and is worth 10. If the no-trump is bid first it will take two nullos to overcall.

The nullo may be doubled and redoubled once, just like any other declaration, and 20 or 40 may be scored for little or grand slam, but there are no honors to be scored by either side.

The player bidding a nullo names the number of tricks over the book that he will compel his opponents to take, not the number of tricks he will take himself. Some persons have an idea that a nullo player names the actual tricks he will win regardless of any book, so that if he bids four nullos he undertakes to win only four actual tricks. This is a mistake. If that is what he means he should bid three nullos, which is a contract to make the opponents take three tricks over the book, leaving the declarer with four tricks.

The score is always counted by the number of tricks taken by the opponents of the declaration. If the bid is three nullos by Y and Z and it is found that A and

B have won three by cards, then Y-Z have made good on their contract. If A-B have won four or five by cards then Y-Z are so much over their contract and score for the extra tricks, just as they would for tricks won over the contract in a positive declaration.

The penalties are counted in the same way. Suppose Y-Z are the declarers, to make three nullos, and at the end of the hand A and B have won only two by cards. The nullo contract is set by one trick, losing 50 points penalty in the honor column; 100 if doubled, 200 if redoubled.

In case of a revoke the tricks are given to the revoking side, instead of being taken from it. Suppose the contract is four nullos by Y-Z and at the end of the hand A-B have won only two by cards, but have revoked. As the hand stands the nullo contract has failed by two tricks, but if the side not in error gives three tricks to A-B they will have won five by cards, and the nullo contract has not only been fulfilled but has a trick over, and scores five by cards, or 50 toward game.

If the declarer of the nullo revokes he scores nothing at all, and the other side takes 100 penalty in honors for the revoke, in addition to any penalties for a failed contract, but no tricks are given in this case, as the opponents of the declaration never take tricks in penalty, only points. Suppose Y-Z have bid four nullos and revoke while A-B win only three by cards. The contract has failed for a trick. That is 50 points. The revoke is 100 more. This is 150.

## XXXVIII

### THE BIDDING AT NULLOS

Time and experience will show just by what scale to measure hands up for nullos and will undoubtedly suggest certain conventions such as are now thoroughly well understood in straight auction. These will gradually become as intelligible a language to the partner as anything we now have in the game.

One thing seems already to be pretty well established, and that is the risk that a dealer quite needlessly runs in bidding nullos originally, and that a nullo player need never expect to get the contract for less than three tricks, although he may hold it for two if the hands are pretty well split up.

If it is true that few nullo contracts can be obtained for less than three tricks there can be no harm in inducing the partner to bid one or two nullos as a starter. Few hands are played at a spade, and there is no harm in bidding a spade to begin with. With this as a foundation we can begin to elaborate a system of bidding up to nullos.

The reason that the dealer should avoid original nullo bids is that they are non-informatory as to the length and distribution of the suits. An original spade shows a hand below average in high cards. If the cards are still high enough to be unsuitable for a nullo, such as eights, nines, and tens, the dealer can show it by refusing to support his partner's nullo declarations.

If they are deuces and treys, he should support the nullo, just as he would support a no-trumper with aces and kings.

It is now conventional to bid two tricks on either of the losing suits, clubs or diamonds, when they offer unusual support for a no-trumper, such as A K Q and three others; but to bid two tricks on the winning suits, hearts and royals, only when they are long enough to be the trump but not strong enough to support a no-trumper. That is, when they are without the tops. You seldom want a weak or losing suit for the trump. A bid of three spades is conventional to show long and weak spades, and a willingness to play royals.

If nulls become a permanent part of the game, these two-trick bids will probably have to be modified, just as several of the bids were modified when the new count came in, and two tricks in any suit will have to mean length and small cards enough to support a nullo. The A K Q 5 3 2 would be an excellent nullo suit; but the A K Q 9 8 7 would not. The intermediate cards, the seven to the jack, are very bad nullo combinations when without smaller cards, so that the dealer should not bid two tricks unless his is safe in the suit, having the deuce, and one or two others below the seven.

No long suit is safe without the deuce.

As a general rule, any original bid of two tricks in any suit but spades, and one of three in that suit, should convey to the partner an opportunity to choose between two declarations instead of commanding him to

stick to the one, as at present. Under the present system a two-trick bid in hearts or royals means "Let me alone, no matter what you have. I want this suit for the trump." With nullos added to the game it means, "In case you do not think I can go game with this suit for trumps, perhaps you can shift to a nullo with advantage to both of us."

The dealer's partner, in considering a nullo bid, must calculate to win some tricks. If he waits until he has nothing but deuces and treys and some assurance that there will be nothing but fours and fives in the dummy, he will be like the timid persons who never bid no trumps unless they have sure tricks in all four suits. When third hand is encouraged to start a nullo by the dealer's show of weakness, he must be prepared to drop it if the dealer does not support it. But if the dealer supports the nullo bid, after having started with a spade or a two-trick bid, the third hand should feel pretty safe in pursuing the declaration, even if he has several high or intermediate cards in his hand.

Singletons and even two-card suits are very useful in nullos, as they allow discards in other suits, but they are more valuable in the concealed hand than in the dummy, as what is the hand that will profit most by getting discards which the adversaries might otherwise prevent.

If a nullo is declared by one partner and the other has the low cards in two suits, but holds intermediates in a third, he may be pretty well assured that his partner has the smaller cards in that suit and the opponents will not have small cards enough to force more

than one trick in it, if that even. One partner will often take a chance on one suit, with low cards in the others, and if the other has very low cards in any suit, that will usually be found to be the suit his partner has taken the chance on. Just as in a no-trump bid by the dealer, if the third hand finds he has all the winners in one suit, that must be the suit the dealer took a chance on finding against him.

The great difference between the nullo or negative bids and the positive bids is that the nullo depends so much on the partner. Seven top hearts are good for seven tricks, no matter what partner has, but seven small hearts are not sure losers at nullos.

We base all no trump bids on averages. The rule is a queen above average and three suits stopped. Of course, it does not always win out, and seldom gets the contract without further bidding, but any good player will take the chance time after time, night after night, and find it pays in the long run.

The same principle that wins out on the average with the high cards, queen above average, can be applied to the small cards at nullos. In no trumps you bid on the presence of the high cards; in nullos on their absence.

Z deals and announces this absence of the high cards by a spade bid, or by two tricks in a suit. Y looks over his cards and finds he has not more than two tricks himself. Then the adversaries must have about nine. What can the third hand lose by challenging them to bid up their hands? If the dealer does not support the nullo, it can be dropped.

Take this case.

♥ J 10		
♣ Q J 8 4 3 2		
♦ 10 8		
♠ K Q 2		
♥ 7 4 3		♥ A K 8 6
♣ K 9 6		♣ .....
♦ J 9		♦ A K Q 6 5 3
♠ A J 9 7 4		♠ 10 6 5
Y		
A	B	
Z		
♥ Q 9 5 2		
♣ A 10 7 5		
♦ 7 4 2		
♠ 8 3		

Z bids a spade. A might bid two spades or pass. Whichever he does, Y would have to bid two clubs in the ordinary game, and B would say two diamonds, and with his partner's support could go game by trumping the first round of clubs if Z led the ace, as all the tricks left for Y and Z would be two spades.

But with nulos in the game Y is not restricted to the club suit. He can bid a nullo. He has seven honors in his hand, it is true, and his partner may have three or four more. What of it? What does Y risk by bidding a nullo?

Some persons would think such a bid was madness with nothing smaller than an eight in one suit, ten in another, and only one small card to the king and queen in a third. But if his partner has bid a spade. Where are all the high cards?

B overcalls the nullo with two diamonds. Z supports his partner with two nulos, showing that he has

unusually small cards. A bids three diamonds. Now Y and Z have got them going, and Y says three nullos, which takes five diamonds to overcall. At this B balked, having five losing cards, so he thought he would see if A wanted to go any further, but A did not.

Now let us see what happens to the ten honors that the Y and Z hands hold between them. They are half the honors in the pack, but they are below average. That is the point. Three tens, two jacks, three queens, a king and an ace, with no suit in either hand shorter than two cards, therefore no opportunity to discard until the third round.

B led the interior spade six and Z played the eight, A the seven and Y the king. Y then led the jack of hearts, underplayed it with dummy's nine so as to win the ten of hearts with the queen and discard the spade queen on the five of hearts, dummy keeping the deuce. There is no escape from this for A and B. If B wins either first or second heart and leads another spade, Y wins it and leads the low spade after the hearts are gone.

The nullo player does not guarantee to lose thirteen tricks, and his game is not to make all his high cards take tricks separately, as it is in a no-trumper. The auction player strives to make three tricks with the ace, queen, jack, and thinks it a misfortune if he makes two only. The nullo player aims to make one only with those three cards, or none at all, and where the auction player strives to separate his winning trumps the nullo player tries to bunch all the high cards in a suit.

It is remarkable how the big cards can be bunched

together on the tricks that must be won, and suits that would be good for four or five tricks at no trumps can often be got rid of for one or two at nulos if they are managed well.

Here is a deal in which the combined hands of the declarer and dummy had between them two aces, two kings, three queens and three jacks. That is, they were a queen and jack stronger than their opponents, yet they made good on their contract to lose nine tricks.

♥ Q 10 4 3		
♦ K J 4		
♦ K Q 6 4 2		
♣ 8		
♥ J 2		♥ A K 9 6
♦ 8 7 5		♣ 10 9 6 2
♦ 10 9 5		♦ 8 7
♣ A K 9 8 6		♣ Q 10 4
	Y	
A	B	
	Z	
♥ 8 7 5		
♦ A Q 3		
♦ A J 3		
♣ J 7 5 2		

Z dealt on the rubber game and bid a spade, being too short in clubs or diamonds to name either of those suits. A said two spades, showing his willingness to have it royals if his partner had the necessary support. Y bid two diamonds and B went two royals. When Z and A both passed, Y shifted to two nulos, as his partner had refused to assist the diamond declaration.

B went three royals, and Z doubled. A passed and Y took the chance of winning the rubber in preference

to getting some trifles of 100 or so in penalties, as he was very weak in royals, and the doubled contract might go game. Of course, B dropped the royals after being doubled. So Y gets it at three nullos.

B led the diamond and Z put on the ace, dropping Y's king. He followed with the jack and won it with the queen. Then he led the jack of clubs, put dummy's ace on it and came back with the queen, winning it with the king. This made four tricks, and he had got rid of eight high cards by the play.

The next lead was the club four. The beginner will observe that a diamond lead at this stage would give one adversary a discard, which is something that one should always avoid as long as possible unless there is something to be gained by it. B put on the six of clubs, hoping his partner had no more.

Judging from his partner's bid of two spades that Y must be short in that suit, B figured Y for several hearts, so he led the king, dropping the eight, jack and queen. On going on with the nine, he dropped the seven, deuce and four, which marked the heart suit as safe for Y and Z and A out of it, as he had to give up the deuce.

B shifted to the interior spade ten, upon which dummy put the seven and A the ace, dropping the trey from Y. This enabled A to place the spades, but he could not be sure of the diamonds or hearts. He could have set the contract at this point by leading the diamond and taking that trick home before returning the spade, because as it happened it would have given B a spade discard.

Such hands as this show that it is a fallacy to suppose that nullos must be all deuces and treys and that high cards are fatal to success. If the other side have enough high cards they must bid them up to get the play. In this case they did not have them, and had B played the hand at three royals doubled he would have been set for a trick at least, and if Z had made the proper opening from the hand, which would be a trump, B would have gone down for 200.

There is frequently a doubt as to whether it is better to play the hand as a nullo or with a suit declaration, although there is never any doubt as between a nullo and a no-trumper. Some players have an exaggerated idea of the value of a trump suit, and while such a suit may be strong enough to carry out a contract it may not be the best declaration for the combined hands by any means. Here is a case in point:

♥ J 9			
♣ J 8 3 2			
♦ J 10 9 5 3 2			
♠ 5			
♥ Q 10	Y	♥ 8 3	
♣ 10 9 4	A B	♣ K Q 7 6	
♦ Q 8 7	Z	♦ A K	
♠ K Q J 9 7		♠ A 10 8 6 4	
♥ A K 7 6 5 4 2			
♣ A 5			
♦ 6 4			
♠ 3 2			

Z dealt and bid two hearts, which A passed. Y bid two nullos, and B said three royals just to wake his

partner up a bit, but afraid to go no trumps with the hearts declared against him. Instead of supporting the nullos Z went four hearts, and that was the winning declaration, as A did not care to risk four royals.

A led a spade and B overtook it to lead trumps. Z won the trump lead and ruffed dummy with a spade, B winning the next trick with the king of diamonds and forcing Z with a spade, so that Z lost a diamond and a club at the end, just missing his contract by a trick.

In spite of his seven trumps Z's hand is infinitely better for a nullo than for a suit bid. Had he supported his partner's declaration B would probably have started with the eight of hearts so as to get discards later. Whatever A plays he wins two heart tricks.

A's next play would be the club, while dummy still had the ace, and Z would win the trick and lead the five, after which it is impossible to make Y or Z take another trick in anything, as there is no way to give A a discard of the club nine.

This shows that in his anxiety to play his seven-card heart suit for the trump Z missed a chance to score a little slam at nullos, which would have given him the game and rubber instead of losing 50 points on a failed contract.

## XXXIX

## TAKING THE PARTNER OUT

Probably one of the first things to attract the attention of the beginner will be the necessity of warning the partner that the nullo bid will come to grief if persisted in.

Some players seem to be unnecessarily anxious about the matter and to imagine that unless they have a hand full of deuces and treys their partner will have to win every trick. They forget that the partner who bids the nullo must have those deuces and treys, and if they have the sixes and sevens, there is nothing left for the opponents but high cards.

Here is a hand which shows how needlessly a person may be alarmed when his partner bids a nullo against a no-trumper, and he has no small cards except one solitary deuce to help out the nullo:

♥ J 9 3		
♦ J 10 8 3		
◊ 10 2		
♠ Q J 10 6		
♥ 7 3	Y	♥ A 10 6 2
♦ K Q 6 4 2	A B	♦ 9
◊ 9 5 3	Z	◊ A J 7 6
♠ 5 4 2		♠ A K 8 3
♥ K Q 8 4		
♦ A 7 5		
◊ K Q 8 4		
♠ 9 7		

Z dealt and bid no trumps. A said two nullos. Upon looking over his cards and heaving a sigh of regret that his partner had not let the no trumper alone, B felt himself compelled to pull his partner out of what he regarded as a dangerous hole, so he bid three hearts, being prepared to shift to royals if he was doubled.

A bid three nullos and held the contract. Y led the ten of diamonds, and Z played king, queen and four, Y discarding a club, as he could force two spade tricks on B by keeping the spades. A won the diamond and put Z in again on that suit. Z then led the interior seven of clubs, A put on the queen, having discarded the king, and led the four to give B a spade discard. Z won and led spades, B winning the ten and leading the heart six.

This A held with the seven, Y having discarded the heart jack leading another small club, on which Y discarded the heart jack and B the heart ace. This gave A his contract against the best play, as B is now safe in spades and hearts.

B's efforts to take the declaration away from his partner would have proved disastrous had they succeeded. At hearts, he might have won two by cards, but that is all. In royals, which he hoped A would support, he would have been doubled and lost at least 400 points, as Z would have led the trump, having every suit stopped.

## XL

## PLAYING A NULLO HAND

One of the principal errors into which the beginner is likely to fall is leading out the smallest cards too early in the hand, and giving the other side an opportunity to get rid of their high cards at once in bunches. Interior leads are very important in playing nullos. As an example of the folly of trying to lose tricks too early in the play, which is the same as making all your aces and kings in the ordinary declarations and so establishing all the smaller cards against you, take this hand:

♥ K J 6 4 3	.
♣ Q 9 5	
♦ 9 2	
♠ J 8 4	
♥ Q 8 2	Y
♣ J 10 8 3	A B
♦ A K 7 5	Z
♠ 10 7	
♥ 10 7 5	.
♣ K 7	
♦ 6 4 3	
♠ A 9 6 5 2	

Z dealt and bid three spades to show the long weak suit. When A passed Y bid a nullo and B no trumps. Z said two nullos and A two no trumps, and then Y took it up and finally got the contract at four nullos.

Instead of beginning with an interior lead or his shortest suit B started with the idea of getting rid of his high cards early and led the ace of clubs, which enabled Y and Z to get rid of the king and queen in one trick. It is never right to lead a winning card from a four-card suit except to exhaust an adversary's power to shake the lead.

When B followed with the deuce of clubs his partner played the trey, giving Y a chance to win the nine and return the five, putting A in. A then led the deuce of hearts instead of the interior eight. Y played the six, as he knew B must head the trick unless all the hearts were in A's hand.

B played the ace and led the nine, which held the trick. Then B tried the trey of spades and Z played the six, knowing A must win it if he had any spades.

When A put on the ten and returned the seven Y played the jack, as he knew the king or queen must win the trick. B made one more effort, leading a small club, which his partner had to win, Y getting a discard of the nine of diamonds. When A tried to get rid of the lead by playing a diamond it was too late, and Y scored a little slam.

This result is due to the want of skill in handling the attack against a nullo on the part of A and B. Both tried to get rid of the tricks too early, by leading their low cards too soon. The correct opening from B's hand was the short suit, ace and then nine of hearts, both of which would hold the trick.

Now the interior six of clubs, not the ace, should follow. This would force the king from Z, who would

have to take out the dangerous deuce of hearts at once by leading the five, giving B a diamond discard. Note that it is useless to discard the spade, as Z holds the deuce of that suit.

Y's play would be to win the heart trick with the six and lead the eight of spades, as he is safe in diamonds. B would put on the king and lead the queen and trey, throwing Y into the lead again with the four, giving A a club discard at the same time. Now Y must lead the diamond, which B holds with the jack, returning the eight, which A would win with the ace, or else A would win the jack with the ace and lead the king.

Now what is Y going to do when A leads the eight of clubs? If he ducks it, B puts on the ace and leads a small one and Y wins the rest of the tricks. If Y puts on the nine, it holds and he wins every other trick, so that he is set for three or four tricks, instead of making a little slam.

## XLI

### PLANNING THE PLAY IN ADVANCE

In nulos the play of the whole hand must be mapped out in advance. As an example of how easily a player may miss a contract through want of foresight in the ordinary game hundreds of hands have been published. Good teachers always impress upon their pupils the importance of elimination, of disregarding any suits in which nothing can be accomplished, and concentrating attention upon those suits in which something may be won, if tricks can be won at all that are not a showdown. Here is an example of what is meant by elimination. The contract was three nulos.

♥ A Q J 3		
♣ 3		
♦ Q J 6 4		
♠ 10 8 5 3		
♥ 10 9 6 4	Y	♥ 8 7 5 2
♣ A K Q 8 6 4	A B	♣ 7 5 2
♦ 10		♦ 9 8 7
♠ 9 7	Z	♠ A K Q
♥ K		
♣ J 10 9		
♦ A K 5 3 2		
♠ J 6 4 2		

A led the ten of diamonds, which Y and Z ducked, because if there are two in each hand the suit is safe, and it is not necessary to win a trick until you are

forced to do so, if you think you can escape it entirely. A shifted to the heart, Y put on the ace.

Instead of stopping to count up the possibilities of the hand Y started to get rid of the lead at once by playing the interior eight of spades, knowing one or both adversaries must win it. B put on the ace and started to clean up the club suit. Z held the trick with the jack.

Another spade lead, and Z is in again with another club, Y discarding one of his dangerous hearts. A third spade lead, and a club puts Z in again, A being able to duck every time. On the third spade A got rid of a heart. Now Z has to play a diamond, on which A gets rid of another heart.

At this point, if Y plays small he loses that trick, but may have to win all the rest, so he puts on the jack and leads the four, throwing B into the lead, but letting A discard his last heart, so that Y is forced to win the deuce of hearts with the trey and take home two more tricks, queen of diamonds and trey of spades.

This gives Y and Z eight tricks on a contract to win four only. The fault lies in Z's failure to plan the play of the hand in advance.

Upon winning with the ace of hearts he should have gone right on with three more leads of hearts, getting rid of dummy's three clubs. If the hearts are split he must lose the trey. If not, he may as well take in a heart trick as a club, as then he can throw the lead in clubs. After this it is impossible to force a trick on either Y or Z except one diamond. Even if he wins that he still makes good on his contract.

## XLII

### CONTROL OF THE LEAD AT NULLOS

One of the most important things in playing nulos is the control of the lead. While it is true that taking the lead means winning a trick, it is also true that winning a trick early in the hand may save three or four later on. It is the old plan of ducking the first round of a long suit so as to catch all the high cards later, but just reversed.

Every beginner at the game will naturally proceed to get rid of all his high cards at every opportunity to do so when he does not have to win a trick with them. If the adversaries play an ace, why not shed the king of that suit? After having successfully skinned his hand down to spot cards in this manner without taking in a trick he will imagine that he has been pretty lucky, but there will be occasions in which he will find that he has simply rendered himself powerless for purposes of defence at the end.

It is an axiom in all nullo games that it is dangerous to be without the lowest card of your long suit, because the adversary that holds the lowest card may lead the suit until only you and he have any of it left. After taking out of your hand all the cards with which you could get rid of the lead he puts you in with your long suit and you take the rest of the tricks.

The situation is often brought about without the suit being led more than once, the partner of the holder of

the small card giving his partner discards of the higher cards in that suit. The defence to this attack is to get the lead and take out that small card before you get skinned down to that one suit. In order to do this you must keep some of your high cards instead of throwing them under higher ones or you cannot control the lead.

♠ A 7 2 ♣ 10 7 6 4 ♦ Q 4 ♣ 9 8 7 2	♠ K J 8 ♣ A 9 3 2 ♦ A K 2 ♣ J 10 6	Y A      B Z	♠ Q 9 6 5 ♣ Q J 8 5 ♦ 8 ♣ A K Q 4
♠ 10 4 3 ♣ K ♦ J 10 9 7 6 5 3 ♣ 5 3			

Z dealt and bid two diamonds, showing the long weak suit, without tops. A passed, Y said two nullos and B three royals, Z and A each assisting his partner, the winning declaration was run up to four nullos, with B to lead.

B led the singleton diamond and A took out two rounds with the ace and king. All the remaining diamonds being in the dummy, A holds the deuce until he gets Z out of everything but diamonds. The third trick, A leads the interior nine of clubs, and B puts the queen under dummy's king.

This mistake on A's part permits Y to make his contract and win the game, because the moment Z gets the

lead he takes out that dangerous deuce of diamonds by leading the suit once more. B discarding another high spade while Y gets rid of the ace of hearts. The ten of hearts is then allowed to win a trick; but after that A and B cannot help winning all the rest, taking the ten they had to take to let Y out on his contract.

A should have foreseen that the moment Z got the lead he would get out the diamond, and A's play was to lead the ace of clubs, not the nine, so as to catch Z's king. In the other suits, A controls the lead and can always keep Z out of it, and no one else can lead the diamonds.

When A followed the ace of clubs with the nine it would be B's business to win the trick with the jack, Z discarding the heart ten. The object of A's play being then apparent, all that B has to do is to take out two rounds of spades, leaving himself with the queen and four. Now the queen of hearts from B's hand allows A to put on the king, and whether Y takes the trick away from him with the ace or not. A is bound to get in on the hearts and then that fatal deuce of diamonds compels Z to win every remaining trick, which sets the contract for two tricks, instead of losing the game on the hand.

## XLIII

### PLAYING AGAINST THE NULLO

In playing against a nullo, there are several points to be studied. The most important thing is to give the partner discards, and to secure them the player usually starts with his shortest suit, or leads an interior card from three or more. The next thing is to keep the smallest cards of suits which the declarer may be obliged to win at the end of the hand.

It is astonishing how badly a nullo may be defeated if the adversaries can give each other discards. Here is an illustration of it. Those opposed to the nullo have all the high cards in the pack except in one suit, yet they defeat the contract for 600 points. The discards are what do it.

♥ 9 8 7 5		
♣ J 10 7 3		
♦ A K 10		
♠ Q J		
♥ K Q 6 4 3		♥ A
♣ 5 2	A	♣ A K Q 4
♦ J 9 4	B	♦ 7 5 3 2
♠ A 7 2	Z	♠ K 9 5 3
♥ J 10 2		
♣ 9 8 6		
♦ Q 8 6		
♠ 10 8 6 4		

Z dealt and bid a spade, A one heart and Y one nullo. B bid no trumps and Z two nullos. When A said three hearts Y went three nullos. This B passed and A, holding such low cards in every suit, doubled, which he thought looked better than pursuing the hearts.

B led the singleton ace of hearts to be out of his partner's way and get discards. He followed this with an interior diamond, the five. Z covered with the eight, A played the nine, forcing Y to win with the ace. Y led his short spade suit, B playing the nine, dummy the ten and A winning the trick with the ace, so as to lead the hearts and give his partner discards. The four and five of hearts allowed B to get rid of the club ace, Z winning with the ten of hearts and at once returning the deuce. When A played the six Y had to win with the eight and B got rid of another club.

Y now led the small club, upon which B put the queen and led the four, which Y had to win with the jack. After this Y could not help himself, as he could not get rid of the lead, so that instead of making his adversaries win nine tricks, he had to win ten tricks himself, his contract being set for 600 points, which only goes to show how many tricks one may be able to win with a poor hand if the opponents know how to give them to you.

This trick of getting the player with a long suit out of all the other suits so that he cannot get rid of the lead at the end, when he particularly wants to do so, is a part of the game that requires skilful management.

Here is an example of the manner in which two players who are wide awake to the situation and who

know just what has to be done and how to do it may take advantage of an exposed hand and kill it, in spite of anything the declarer can do to protect it; but it must be observed that the smallest slip in the attack would let the declaration go through.

♥ J 10 6		
♦ Q 7 3 2		
◆ J 2		
♠ J 9 6 4		
♥ A 9 4	Y	♥ K Q 7 2
♣ J 9 8 6	A B	♦ A K 10 5 4
♦ A 9 3		♦ Q
♠ A Q 10	Z	♠ K 5 3
♥ 8 5 3		
♣ .....		
♦ K 10 8 7 6 5 4		
♠ 8 7 2		

Z dealt and bid two diamonds. A said two no-trumps and Y bid three nullos. B assisted his partner with three no-trumps, Z bidding four nullos, A four no-trumps, Y five nullos, and finally six on A's refusal to go further than five no-trumps.

With his small cards in three suits and a singleton to lead, B did not believe he and his partner could be forced to win twelve tricks out of the thirteen, so he doubled, and when all passed the double he led the queen of diamonds.

A won the trick with the ace, Z dropping the ten and Y the jack. This made it easy for A to place the deuce of diamonds alone in Y's hand or in B's, and no matter in which hand it is, A can force Z into the lead with

the last of the diamonds by playing the nine first. If Z wins it every diamond in his hand is high. If Z ducks the nine, the trey puts him in.

But before making this play it is necessary to strip Z's hand of all the other suits or he will exhaust the diamonds and then throw the lead by playing hearts or spades. The problem for A and B, therefore, is not only to get dummy's hand down to nothing except diamonds but to arrange for A to be in the lead, so that he can play diamonds when the proper time comes.

A started with the interior heart, the nine. Y ducked it with the six and B put on the king. B returned the interior heart seven, Z dropping the five, A playing ace and Y the jack. At this point A was afraid that Y held the queen of hearts and that another heart might let him in. Then if it is Y that holds the deuce of diamonds he can lead it, making dummy take the trick with the king, when B does not follow suit, and lead a third round. After that the suit is dead, although the contract is set, but with small loss.

Fearing to lose his advantage, A shifted to the spade ten and Y began to see his danger. If the trey and nine of diamonds are split he may still make his contract by winning this spade trick with the jack, leading the diamond and hoping for a discard of the heart ten. If the diamonds are both in one hand, his contract is hopeless, but he may escape with a one-trick loss.

B saw through the scheme and took the trick away from him with the spade king, returning the five, which threw A back into the lead.

Now A has a nice little problem before him. If he takes out dummy's last spade and leaves him with the trey of hearts, Y makes his contract if he is not obliged to win the heart trick when dummy leads the small one, as Z need not win more than one diamond. If A leads the heart now, and Y has the ten, A can never get in again to lead a diamond, as B will probably be compelled to take all the rest of the tricks in the club suit.

The ability to lead diamonds when the time came being the vital point of the hand, A took a chance on the heart, keeping the spade for re-entry. Y put on the ten. Fortunately B was alive to the situation and took the trick away from him with the queen of hearts, leading a third round of spades. This A won and played the nine of diamonds, which Z ducked, but he was forced to win the next lead and all the rest of the tricks, the contract being set for 400 points.

All through this hand Y is helpless to save his dummy from its fate. Had he been allowed to hold the first spade trick with the jack and to lead the diamond, he would have seen, the moment B refused diamonds, that his play was to put on the king and have the suit done with at once by leading another round, discarding the ten of hearts from his own hand. On the small heart from dummy, Y gets rid of the club queen, and A or B would have to win the rest.

This would have let Y off with a loss of only one trick on his contract, but B's shrewdness in overtaking both the spade and the heart at the critical moments in the play cost Y just three tricks.

# THE LAWS OF AUCTION

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## THE RUBBER

1. The partners first winning two games win the rubber. When the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

## SCORING

2. Each side has a trick score and a score for all other counts, generally known as the honor score. In the trick score the only entries made are points for tricks won (see Law 3), which count both toward the game and in the total of the rubber.

All other points, including honors, penalties, slam, little slam, and undertricks, are recorded in the honor score, which counts only in the total of the rubber.

3. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid or more, each above six counts on the trick score: two points when spades are trumps, six when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when royal spades are trumps, and ten when the declaration is no trump.

4. A game consists of thirty points made by tricks alone. Every deal is played out, whether or not during it the game be concluded, and any points made (even if in excess of thirty) are counted.

5. The ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of the trump suit are the honors; when no trump is declared, the aces are the honors.

6. Honors are credited to the original holders; they are valued as follows:

*When a Trump is Declared.*

8\* honors held between partners equal value of 2 tricks.

4	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	4	"
5	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	5	"
4	"	"	in 1 hand		"	"	"	8	"
4	"	"	1	"	5th in partner's hand	"	"	9	"
5	"	"	1	"	5th in partner's hand	"	"	10	"

*When No Trump is Declared.*

8 aces held between partners count 30

4	"	"	"	"	"	"	40
5	"	"	in one hand		"	"	100

7. Slam is made when partners take thirteen tricks.† It counts 40 points in the honor score.

8. Little slam is made when partners take twelve tricks.‡ It counts 20 points in the honor score.

9. The value of honors, slam, or little slam, is not affected by doubling or redoubling.

10. At the conclusion of a rubber the trick and honor scores of each side are added and 250 additional points added to the score of the winners of the rubber. The size of the rubber is the difference between the completed scores. If the score of the losers of the rubber exceed that of the winners, the losers win the amount of the excess.

\*Frequently called "simple honors."

† Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained.

‡ Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring little slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a little slam not otherwise obtained. If a declarer bid 7 and take twelve tricks he counts 20 for little slam, although his declaration fails.

11. When a rubber is started with the agreement that the play shall terminate (*i. e.*, no new deal shall commence) at a specified time, and the rubber is unfinished at that hour, the score is made up as it stands, 125 being added to the score of the winners of a game. A deal if started must be finished.

12. A proved error in the honor score may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proved error in the trick score may be corrected at any time before a declaration has been made in the following game, or, if it occur in the final game of the rubber, before the score has been made up and agreed upon.

### CUTTING

14. In cutting the ace is the lowest card; between cards of otherwise equal value the heart is the lowest, the diamond next, the club next, and spade the highest.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut.

### FORMING TABLES

17. Those first in the room have the prior right to play. Candidates of equal standing decide their order by cutting; those who cut lowest play first.

18. Six players constitute a complete table.

19. After the table has been formed, the players cut to decide upon partners, the two lower play against the two higher. The lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having made his selection, must abide by it.\*

20. The right to succeed players as they retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcements, in the order made, entitle candidates to fill vacancies as they occur.

\*He may consult his partner before making his decision.

**CUTTING OUT**

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission be claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players who have played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers withdraw; when all have played the same number, they cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.\*

**RIGHT OF ENTRY**

22. At the end of a rubber a candidate is not entitled to enter a table unless he declare his intention before any player cut, either for partners, for a new rubber, or for cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at an existing table have the prior right of entry. Others decide their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, which cannot be formed without him, in which case he may retain his position cut out.

25. A player belonging to one table who enters another, or announces a desire to do so, forfeits his rights at his original table, unless the new table cannot be formed without him or them, he or they shall be the last to at his original table by announcing his intention to return as soon as his place at the new table can be filled.

26. Should a player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment becomes void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and does not in any way affect the rights of the substitute.

27. If a player break up a table, the others have a prior right of entry elsewhere.

\*See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.

### SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so the face of any card be seen.

29. The dealer's partner must collect the cards from the preceding deal and has the right to shuffle first. Each player has the right to shuffle subsequently. The dealer has the right to shuffle last, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling or while giving the pack to be cut, he must reshuffle.

30. After shuffling, the cards, properly collected, must be placed face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the end of the current deal.

### THE DEAL

31. Players deal in turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. Immediately before the deal, the player on the dealer's right cuts, so that each packet contains at least four cards. If, in or after cutting, and prior to the beginning of the deal, a card be exposed, or if any doubt exist as to the place of the cut, the dealer must reshuffle and the same player must cut again.

33. After the pack has been properly cut, it should not be reshuffled or recut except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle after the cut, his adversaries may also shuffle and the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards must be dealt face downward. The deal is completed when the last card is dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal, the same pack must be dealt again by the same player.

### A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal:

(a) If the cards be not dealt, beginning at the dealer's left into four packets one at a time and in regular rotation.

- (b) If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack be proved incorrect.
- (c) If, during a deal, any card be faced in the pack or exposed, on, above, or below the table.
- (d) If more than thirteen cards be dealt to any player.\*
- (e) If the last card does not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- (f) If the dealer omit having the pack cut, deal out of turn or with the adversaries' cards, and either adversary call attention to the fact before the end of the deal and before looking at any of his cards.

38. Should a correction of any offense mentioned in 37 f not be made in time, or should an adversary who has looked at any of his cards be the first to call attention to the error, the deal stands, and the game proceeds as if the deal had been correct, the player to the left dealing the next. When the deal has been with the wrong cards, the next dealer may take whichever pack he prefers.

39. If, prior to the cut for the following deal, a pack be proved incorrect, the deal is void, but all prior scores stand.†

The pack is not incorrect when a missing card or cards are found in the other pack, among the quitted tricks, below the table, or in any other place which makes it possible that such card or cards were part of the pack during the deal.

40. Should three players have their proper number of cards, the fourth, less, the missing card or cards, if found, belong to him, and he, unless dummy, is answerable for any established revoke or revokes he may have made just as if the missing card or cards had been continuously in his hand. When a card is missing, any player may search the other pack, the quitted tricks, or elsewhere for it.

If before, during, or at the conclusion of play, one player hold more than the proper number of cards, and another less, the deal is void.

\*This error, whenever discovered, renders a new deal necessary.

†A correct pack contains exactly fifty-two cards, one of each denomination.

41. A player may not cut, shuffle, or deal for his partner if either adversary object.

### THE DECLARATION

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must declare to win at least one odd trick,\* either with a specified suit, or at no trump.

43. After the dealer has declared, each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, must pass, make a higher declaration, double the last declaration, or redouble a declaration which has been doubled, subject to the provisions of Law 54.

44. A declaration of a greater number of tricks in a suit of lower value, which equals the last declaration in value of points, is a higher declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three spades" is higher than "one club."

45. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.

46. The player who makes the final declaration† must play the combined hands, his partner becoming dummy, unless the suit or no trump finally declared was bid by the partner before it was called by the final declarer, in which case the partner, no matter what bids have intervened, must play the combined hands.

47. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Law 3).‡

47a. When the declarer fails to win as many tricks as he declares, neither he nor his adversaries score anything toward the game, but his adversaries score in their honor column 50 points for each undertrick (*i. e.*, each trick short of the number declared). If the declaration be doubled, the adversaries score 100 points; if redoubled, 200 points for each undertrick.

\*One trick more than six.

†A declaration becomes final when it has been passed by three players.

‡For amount scored by declarer, if doubled, see Laws 53 and 56.

48. The loss on the dealer's original declaration of "one spade" is limited to 100 points, whether doubled or not, unless redoubled. Honors are scored as held.

49. If a player make a declaration (other than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, or may allow such declaration to stand, in which case the bidding shall continue as if the declaration had been in turn.

If a player pass out of turn, the order of the bidding is not affected, *i. e.*, it is still the turn of the player to the left of the last declarer. The player who has passed out of turn may re-enter the bidding in his proper turn if the declaration he has passed be overbid or doubled.

50. If a player make an insufficient or impossible declaration, either adversary may demand that it be penalized. The penalty for an insufficient declaration is that the bid is made sufficient in the declaration named and the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double. The penalty for an impossible declaration is that the bid is made seven in the suit named and the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double. Either adversary, instead of penalizing an impossible declaration, may demand a new deal, or that the last declaration made on behalf of his partnership become the final declaration.

50a. If a player who has been debarred from bidding under Laws 50 or 65, during the period of such prohibition, make any declaration (other than passing), either adversary may decide whether such declaration stand, and neither the offending player nor his partner may further participate in the bidding even if the adversaries double or declare.

50b. A penalty for a declaration out of turn (see Law 49), an insufficient or impossible declaration (see Law 50), or a bid when prohibited (see Law 50a) may not be enforced if either adversary pass, double, or declare before the penalty be demanded.\*

\*When the penalty for an insufficient declaration is not demanded, the bid over which it was made may be repeated unless some higher bid have intervened.

50c. Laws which give to either adversary the right to enforce a penalty, do not permit unlimited consultation. Either adversary may call attention to the offence and select the penalty, or may say, "Partner, you determine the penalty," or words to that effect. Any other consultation is prohibited,\* and if it take place, the right to demand any penalty is lost. The first decision made by either adversary is final and cannot be altered.

51. At any time during the declaration, a question asked by a player concerning any previous bid must be answered, but, after the final declaration has been accepted, if an adversary of the declarer inform his partner regarding any previous declaration, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy give such information to the declarer, either adversary of the declarer may call a lead. A player, however, at any time may ask what declaration is being played and the question must be answered.

52. A declaration legitimately made cannot be changed after the next player pass, declare, or double. Prior to such action a declaration inadvertently made may be corrected. If, prior to such correction, an adversary call attention to an insufficient or impossible declaration, it may not thereafter be corrected nor may the penalty be avoided.

### DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

53. Doubling and redoubling doubles and quadruples the value of each trick over six, but it does not alter the value of a declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three clubs" is higher than "two royal spades" doubled or redoubled.

54. Any declaration may be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player may not double his partner's declaration nor redouble his partner's double, but he may

\*The question, "Partner, will you select the penalty, or shall I?" is a form of consultation which is not permitted.

redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

The penalty for redoubling more than once is 100 points in the adverse honor score or a new deal; for doubling a partner's declaration, or redoubling a partner's double it is 50 points in the adverse honor score. Either adversary may demand any penalty enforceable under this law.

55. Doubling or redoubling reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any one of the three succeeding players, including the player whose declaration has been doubled, may, in his proper turn, make a further declaration of higher value.

56. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of 50 points in his honor score, and a further 50 points for each additional trick. When he or his partner has redoubled, he scores 100 points for making the contract and an additional 100 for each extra trick.

57. A double or redouble is a declaration, and a player who doubles or redoubles out of turn is subject to the penalty provided by Law 49.

58. After the final declaration has been accepted, the play begins; the player on the left of the declarer leads.

#### DUMMY

59. As soon as the player on the left of the declarer leads, the declarer's partner places his cards face upward on the table, and the declarer plays the cards from that hand.

60. The partner of the declarer has all the rights of a player (including the right to call attention to a lead from the wrong hand), until his cards are placed face upward on the table.\* He then becomes the dummy, and takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:

(a) To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;

\*The penalty is determined by the declarer (see Law 66).

- (b) to correct an improper claim of either adversary;
- (c) to call attention to a trick erroneously taken by either side.
- (d) to participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;
- (e) to correct any erroneous score;
- (f) to consult with and advise the declarer as to which penalty to exact for a revoke;
- (g) to ask the declarer whether he have any of a suit he has renounced.

The dummy, if he have not intentionally looked at any card in the hand of a player, has also the following additional rights:

- (h) To call the attention of the declarer to an established adverse revoke;
- (i) to call the attention of the declarer to a card exposed by an adversary or to an adverse lead out of turn.

61. Should the dummy call attention to any other incident in the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer may not exact such penalty. Should the dummy avail himself of rights (h) or (i), after intentionally looking at a card in the hand of a player, the declarer may not exact any penalty for the offence in question.

62. If the dummy, by touching a card or otherwise, suggest the play of one of his cards, either adversary may require the declarer to play or not to play such card.

62a. If the dummy call to the attention of the declarer that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, either adversary may require that the lead be made from that hand.

63. Dummy is not subject to the revoke penalty; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick be turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the trick must stand.

64. A card from the declarer's hand is not played until actually quitted, but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is played unless he say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which to play.

**CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY**

65. After the deal and before the declaration has been finally determined, if any player lead or expose a card, his partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration,\* and the card is subject to call.† When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarer may also prohibit the initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

66. After the final declaration has been accepted and before the lead, if the partner of the proper leader expose or lead a card, the declarer may treat it as exposed or may call a suit from the proper leader. A card exposed by the leader, after the final declaration and before the lead, is subject to call.

**CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY**

67. After the original lead, all cards exposed by the declarer's adversaries are liable to be called and must be left face upward on the table.

68. The following are exposed cards:

- (1) Two or more cards played simultaneously;
- (2) a card dropped face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named;
- (3) a card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face;
- (4) a card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

69. A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table, or so held that it is seen by an adversary but not by the partner, is not an exposed card.

70. Two or more cards played simultaneously by either of the declarer's adversaries give the declarer the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick and to treat the other card or cards as exposed.

\*See Law 50a.

†If more than one card be exposed, all may be called.

70a. Should an adversary of the declarer expose his last card before his partner play to the twelfth trick, the two cards in his partner's hand become exposed, must be laid face upward on the table, and are subject to call.

71. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and dummy and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks. The other cards thus improperly played are exposed.

72. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards face upward on the table, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. He is not then allowed to call any cards his adversaries may have exposed, nor to take any finesse not previously proved a winner unless he announce it when making his claim.

73. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86, and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit, he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 66, 76, and 93), or if, when called upon to win or lose a trick, he fail to do so when he can (Laws 71, 80, and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, he fail to play as directed (Laws 65 and 66), he is liable to the penalty for revoke (Law 84) unless such play be corrected before the trick be turned and quitted.

74. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

75. The call of an exposed card may be repeated until it be played.

**LEADS OUT OF TURN**

76. If either adversary of the declarer's lead out of turn, the declarer may either treat the card so led as exposed or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead. Should they lead simultaneously, the lead from the proper hand stands, and the other card is exposed.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or dummy, he incurs no penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary.\* If the second hand play, the lead is accepted.

78. If an adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, and the declarer follow either from his own hand or dummy, the trick stands. If the declarer before playing refuse to accept the lead, the leader may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

**CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR**

80. Should the fourth hand, not being dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be required to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick. In such case, if the second hand be void of the suit led, the declarer in lieu of any other penalty may call upon the second hand to play the highest card of any designated suit. If he name a suit of which the second hand is void, the penalty is paid.†

81. If any one, except dummy, omit playing to a trick, and such error be not corrected until he has played to the next, the adversaries or either of them may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal stand, the surplus card (at the end of the hand) is considered played

\*The rule in Law 50c as to consultations governs the right of adversaries to consult as to whether such direction be given.

†Should the declarer play third hand before the second hand, the fourth hand may without penalty play before his partner.

to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.\*

82. When any one, except dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may make. When the error is detected during the play, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and such card or cards restored to the original holder.†

### THE REVOKE‡

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke when the trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winners (*i. e.*, the hand removed from the trick after it has been turned face downward on the table), or when either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, leads or plays to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:

- (a) When the declarer revokes, he cannot score for tricks and his adversaries add 100 points to their score in the honor column, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revokes, the declarer may either add 100 points to his score in the honor column or take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own.§ Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but shall not entitle him to score any bonus in the honor column in case the declaration has been

\* As to the right of adversaries to consult, see Law 500.

† Either adversary may decide which card shall be considered played to the trick which contains more than four cards.

‡ See Law 73.

§ The dummy may advise the declarer which penalty to exact.

doubled or redoubled, nor to a slam or little slam not otherwise obtained.\*

(c) When, during the play of a deal, more than one revoke is made by the same side, the penalty for each revoke after the first is 100 points.

The value of their honors is the only score that can be made by a revoking side.

85. A player may ask his partner if he have a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick be turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may withdraw his or their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault be one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed, and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases, or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick, but this penalty cannot be exacted from the declarer.

87. At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honors. In such case, if one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side.

\*The value of the three tricks, doubled or redoubled, as the case may be, is counted in the trick score.

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**GENERAL RULES**

90. A trick turned and quitted may not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the play. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before the trick is turned and quitted, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. When an adversary of the declarer, before his partner plays, calls attention to the trick, either by saying it is his, or, without being requested to do so, by naming his card or drawing it toward him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. An adversary of the declarer may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

**NEW CARDS**

95. Unless a pack be imperfect, no player has the right to call for one new pack. When fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. When they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries of the player demanding them have the choice of the new cards. If it be the beginning of a new rubber, the dealer, whether he or one of his adversaries call for the new cards, has the choice. New cards cannot be substituted after the pack has been cut for a new deal.

96. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

**BYSTANDERS**

97. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exactation of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

**ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION**

In the game of Auction slight intimations convey much information. The code succinctly states laws which fix penalties for an offense. To offend against etiquette is far more serious than to offend against a law; for in the latter case the offender is subject to the prescribed penalties; in the former his adversaries are without redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "one heart," "one no trump," "pass," "double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.

2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not show by word or gesture the nature of his hand, or his pleasure or displeasure at a play, bid, or double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. An opponent of the declarer should not lead until the preceding trick has been turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A card should not be played with such emphasis as to draw attention to it, nor should a player detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Conversation during the play should be avoided, as it may annoy players at the table or at other tables in the room.

8. The dummy should not leave his seat to watch his partner play. He should not call attention to the score nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold.

9. If a player say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating that the remaining tricks, or any number thereof, are his, and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play.

10. If a player concede, in error, one or more tricks, the concession should stand.

11. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission in another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.

12. A player should not look at any of his cards until the end of the deal.

#### THE LAWS OF THREE HUNDRED AUCTION

The Laws of Auction govern the three-hand game except as follows:

(1) Three players take part in a game and four constitute a complete table. Each plays for himself; there are no partners, except as provided in Law 7.

(2) The player who cuts lowest selects his seat and the cards with which he deals first. The player who cuts next lowest sits on the dealer's left.

(3) The cards are dealt in four packets, one for each of the three players and one for the dummy.\* The dummy hand is not touched until after the final declaration has been made.

(4) The dealer declares, and the bidding continues as in Auction, except that each player bids exclusively on his own account.

(5) The penalty for a declaration out of turn is that each of the other players receives 50 points in his honor score. A declaration out of turn does not affect the right of the player whose turn it is to declare, unless both he

\*This hand is generally dealt opposite to the dealer.

and the other player, either by passing or declaring, accept the improper declaration.

(6) If a player declare out of turn, and the succeeding player either pass or declare, the third player may demand that the mistake be corrected as is provided in Law 5. In such case the player who first declared out of turn is the only one penalized.

(7) The player making the final declaration, *i. e.*, a declaration that has been passed by both of the others, plays his own hand and that of the dummy against the two others, who then, and for that particular hand, assume the relationship of partners.

(8) It is advisable that the game be played at a round table so that the hand of the dummy can be placed in front of the declarer without obliging any player to move; but, in the event of a square table being used, the two players who become the adversaries of the declarer should sit opposite each other, the dummy being opposite the declarer. At the end of the play the original positions should be resumed.

(9) If, after the deal has been completed and before the conclusion of the declaration, any player expose a card, each of his adversaries counts 50 points in his honor score, and the declarer, if he be not the offender, may call upon the player on his left to lead or not to lead the suit of the exposed card. If a card be exposed by the declarer after the final declaration, there is no penalty, but if exposed by an adversary of the declarer, it is subject to the same penalty as in Auction.

(10) If a player double out of turn, each of his adversaries counts 100 points in his respective honor score, and the player whose declaration has been doubled may elect whether the double shall stand. The bidding is then resumed, but if the double shall be disallowed, the declaration may not be doubled by the other player.

(11) The rubber continues until two games have been won by the same player; it may consist of two, three, or four games.

(12) When the declarer fulfils his contract, he scores as in Auction. When he fails to do so, both of his adversaries score as in Auction.

(13) Honors are scored by each player separately, *i. e.*, each player who holds one honor scores the value of a trick; each player who holds two honors scores twice the value of a trick; a player who holds three honors scores three times the value of a trick; a player who holds four honors scores eight times the value of a trick; and a player who holds five honors scores ten times the value of a trick. In a no-trump declaration, each ace counts ten, and four held by one player count 100. The declarer counts separately both his own honors and those held by the dummy.

(14) A player scores 125 points for winning a game, a further 125 points for winning a second game, and 250 points for winning a rubber.

(15) At the end of the rubber, all scores of each player are added and his total obtained. Each one wins from or loses to each other the difference between their respective totals. A player may win from both the others, lose to one and win from the other, or lose to both.

### THE LAWS OF DUPLICATE AUCTION

Duplicate Auction is governed by the Laws of Auction, except in so far as they are modified by the following special laws:

A. *Scoring.* In Duplicate Auction there are neither games nor rubbers. Each deal is scored just as in Auction, with the addition that whenever a pair makes 30 or more for tricks as the score of one deal, it adds as a premium 125 points in its honor column.

B. *Irregularities in the Hands.* If a player have either more or less than his correct number of cards, the course to be pursued is determined by the time of the discovery of the irregularity.

- (1) When the irregularity is discovered before or during the original play: There must be a new deal.
- (2) When the irregularity is discovered at the time the cards are taken up for overplay and before such overplay has begun: It must be sent back to the table from which it came, and the error be there rectified.

(3) When the irregularity is not discovered until after the overplay has begun: In two-table duplicate there must be a new deal; but in a game in which the same deals are played at more than two tables, the hands must be rectified as is provided above and then passed to the next table without overplay at the table at which the error was discovered; in which case, if a player have less than thirteen cards and his adversary the corresponding surplus, each pair takes the average score for that deal; if, however, his partner have the corresponding surplus, his pair is given the lowest score and his opponents the highest score made at any table for that deal.

C. *Playing the cards.* Each player, when it is his turn to play, must place his card, face upward, before him and toward the centre of the table. He must allow it to remain upon the table in this position until all have played to the trick, when he must turn it over and place it face downward, nearer to himself; if he or his partner have won the trick, the card should point toward his partner and himself; otherwise it should point toward the adversaries.

The declarer may either play dummy's cards or may call them by name whenever it is dummy's turn to play and have dummy play them for him.

A trick is turned and quitted when all four players have turned and ceased to touch their respective cards.

The cards must be left in the order in which they were played until the scores of the deal have been recorded.

D. *The Revoke.* A revoke may be claimed at any time before the last trick of the deal in which it occurs has been turned and quitted and the scores of that deal agreed upon and recorded, but not thereafter.

E. *Error in Score.* A proved error in the trick or honor score may be corrected at any time before the final score of the contestants for the deal or deals played before changing opponents has been made up and agreed upon.

F. *A New Deal.* A new deal is not allowed for any reason, except as provided in Laws of Auction 36 and 37. If there be an impossible declaration some other penalty

must be selected.\* A declaration (other than passing) out of turn must stand;† as a penalty, the adversaries score 50 honor points in their honor column and the partner of the offending player cannot thereafter participate in the bidding of that deal.

The penalty for the offense mentioned in Law 81 is 50 points in the adverse honor score.

*G. Team Matches.* A match consists of any agreed number of deals, each of which is played once at each table.

The contesting teams must be of equal size, but each may consist of any agreed number of pairs (not less than two). One half of each team, or as near thereto as possible, sits north and south; the other half east and west.

In case the teams are composed of an odd number of pairs, each team, in making up its total score, adds, as though won by it, the average score of all pairs seated in the positions opposite to its odd pair.

In making up averages, fractions are disregarded and the nearest whole numbers taken, unless it be necessary to take the fraction into account to avoid a tie, in which case the match is won "by the fraction of a point." The team making the higher score wins the match.

*H. Pair Contests.* The score of a pair is compared only with other pairs who have played the same hands. A pair obtains a plus score for the contest when its net total is more than the average; a minus score for the contest when its net total is less than the average.

\*See Law 50. The same ruling applies to Law 54.

†This includes a double or redouble out of turn. See Law 57.









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